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THE EDUCATION OF HENRY ADAMS, 1871-1891

by

GEORGE MARSHEL DENNISON

B.A. Montana State University, 1962

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

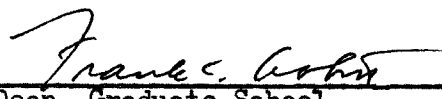
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1963

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PREFACE

PREFACE

Henry Adams completed his ". . . study of twentieth century multiplicity . . ." -- as he originally sub-titled the Education -- in 1907. Writing, he claimed, an integral ending or a sequel to Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres, Adams professed his aim in the Education that of fitting ". . . young men, in universities or elsewhere, to be men of the world."¹ But, was the book equipped to fulfill such a function, or did Adams really intend that end? Was Adams so terribly fearful of a rapidly approaching extinction of the world, or did he use the tactics of a Jonathan Swift, a George Orwell, or an Aldous Huxley, to impress upon his readers the necessity of an informed awareness of the physical and intellectual events occurring daily in modern social life? Was Adams as pessimistic and fatalistic as a hurried perusal of his works suggests to the reader, or was his hidden purpose to awaken a reaction against the strictures he vented upon American society, or the theory of evolution, or the forward movement toward the realization of democratic ideals?

At first glance one assumes that Adams was a pessimistic, fatalistic, pseudo-scientist who attempted to apply immutable laws proving the decay and dissolution of society and the world. Adams, however, defies such easy assessment. Filled with paradox, hidden meaning, and delicate nuance of thought, his writings require careful assimilation.

¹Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Sentry Edition; Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1961), p. xxiv. (Hereafter: Adams, Education.)

A question arises immediately. Who was this paragon of paradox, and what relation exists between him and any study of American history? Why bother with an attempt to solve an insolvable riddle fabricated in the mind of a man not even a public official or philosopher of note? Perhaps some light can be shed on these and related questions by delving into the character of an age and of a figure belonging to that age. One must first place Henry Adams into the proper perspective, as he appeared in nineteenth century America.

Henry Adams, as a representative man of nineteenth century America, was impressed by the miasma of continual change, but was never actually certain of how best to cope with it. He discerned and deprecated the vast changes that had transformed early American society into the order prevailing when he attained maturity. Alteration had followed alteration with increasing rapidity until observers lost their sense of continuity. Caught between seemingly immutable forces, he fought valiantly to retain his integrity and his faith in the inherent virtues of human and social life. As a thinker, Adams represented the transition between nineteenth century liberal, aristocratic thought and the modern, pragmatic theories of the twentieth century. His reactions to the events of the time, his attitudes toward emerging social patterns, his acute criticisms of the important figures of the era, lay the foundation for a valid study of the late nineteenth century. Slowly, over the course of a long and varied life, Adams recognized and amplified theoretical postulates concerning the nature of modern society. Much of what he observed he recorded in his classic, The Education of Henry Adams, which is not really an autobiography but a polemic treatise

discussing trends and tendencies. But the Education was incomplete. Adams omitted the most important twenty years of his life.

Various interpretations of Adams and his life have been placed before the reading public since Adams' death in 1918. Ernest Samuels has projected the most extensive study, having completed two volumes to date. Robert Hume has produced an appreciative, sensitive appraisal of Adams, in which Adams received friendly and laudatory treatment. Jacob Levenson, following observations made by the late Van Wyck Brooks, contributed toward this investigation of Adams by emphasizing the changes occurring in Adams as a result of the challenges of life. Perhaps the most balanced and penetrating observations came from the pen of George Hochfield. But still notably lacking is any careful research into the missing twenty years, with the goal of finishing the Education. During these twenty years, Adams formulated the postulates that would guide him in later life. With this realization in mind, and relying upon the work already completed, the present study concerns itself almost exclusively with the thought and action of Henry Adams during the period he neglected in the Education. Without being overly selective, an attempt has been made to focus this appraisal sharply upon the emerging ideas of Henry Adams, thus following the pattern laid out by Adams himself and allowing but slight attention to the formalities of biography per se.

A study of the continuing education of Henry Adams during the years 1871-1891 requires a great reliance upon personal correspondence which indicates Adams' reactions to the occurrences of the period. One must expect to obtain an intimate familiarity with both Henry Adams and the twenty year interval. Because of the nature of the available material, much weight has been placed upon a careful analysis of the

correspondence between Henry Adams and Charles M. Gaskell, an English acquaintance of the Civil War years who shared Adams' basic attitudes toward government, reform and society, and who remained in close contact with Adams throughout their lives. His letters to Robert Cunliffe, another Englishman, and to John Hay have also been quite rewarding. An attempt has been made to trace the origin of later traits in the Adams' make-up. Considering the quality of much of the work already available, only with great caution and considerable hesitancy has this analysis of Henry Adams as an evolving personality been undertaken. The project aims at helping to explain the emergence of a complex and controversial intellect, and the research has been directed toward that goal.

The plan of attack is quite simple, to trace the education of Henry Adams in three inter-related spheres: political, professional and cultural. Where possible, relationships between the three spheres of activity have been marked out with the hope of presenting a more unified, integral portrait of the man and his thought. At any rate, the purpose of this work is to explore the events and developments of the period 1871-1891, thereby throwing later occurrences into better perspective. Not mere curiosity prompted the endeavor, but a desire to understand the character and work of a man, quick to observe deficiency in individual and society, whose ideas retain their validity and vitality after fifty years of intensive change and challenge.

The extensive use of letters required in this study created a problem in citation. When the source has been the Massachusetts Historical Society microfilm of Adams letters, the form used in citing has been simply to indicate the addressee and the date (Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 30, 1890). If the letter cited was taken from any of

the volumes of published letters, the volume has been indicated in parentheses following the citation of the letter [Letter, Henry Adams to E. L. Godkin, November 25, 1879 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 89)]. Where possible, citations from the microfilm have been used.

-- George Marshal Dennison

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Henry Adams, on February 16, 1838, entered a world seemingly designed for his benefit and for his development. The history of his family suggested that stature in a world of men was his, should he aspire to it, by way of heritage from a long line of historically important ancestors stretching back to the birth of the nation. Adams took for granted the possession of meritorious qualification, and imbibed from his earliest remembrances an overweening sense of moral duty, much akin to the Puritan idea of "sanctification."¹ His mature idea of life directed that one perceive and act upon higher principles, which forced a constant struggle to fulfill moral obligations to self and society. Associated with this principled stand, and re-enforcing it, stood the idea that history recorded the moral and teleological unfolding of man's attempt to conquer his environment and his weaknesses. In Adams' mind, a Puritan conscience became thoroughly "politicized," as it had been for every Adams since John Adams defended the British soldiers who so tyrannously massacred the worthy Boston inhabitants.² Coursing through the Adamses, generation by generation, this sense of an incumbent duty strengthened and ramified to the extent that it became an almost overbearing force on the fourth generation. Adams felt the weight of this burden imposed by his lineage, but the incumbrance

¹George Hochfield, Henry Adams: An Introduction and an Interpretation (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1962), pp. 2-4. (Hereafter: Hochfield, Henry Adams).

²Ibid., pp. 2-4.

was light when compared to the fate of an individual who, shrugging off the load, went about his way without realizing that he had lost his claim to humanness by shirking that higher responsibility. One who retreated to animal existence by satisfying his own desires and caring nothing for the welfare of man denuded himself of characteristics qualifying him for life in society. Adams carried this burden well. In fact, he only too eagerly assumed the responsibility, and when an uncaring society denied him eminence in political activity, he converted his duty into that of an artist who could benefit mankind if his message to society were heeded.

As an artist, Adams did not shirk the obligation passed on to him by his illustrious ancestors. His conception of an artist required that he accept a responsibility to society, a duty to demonstrate to society right from wrong.³ Given his particular point of view, it is easily understood why Adams should be disturbed by the social conditions during the latter half of the nineteenth century. His letters are replete with reference to the vice and corruption of the times. There is continual allusion to regression rather than progress, an inversion of the Darwinist theories taking hold and solidifying during the same period. As Ernest Samuels has pointed out, Adams was well aware of the new ideas being promulgated that emphasized the evolution

³Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, January 17, 1887 (This form is used to cite any letter taken from the microfilm of Adams' letters, with no other identification. See the appended bibliography); letter, Henry Adams to E. D. Shaw, December 20, 1904 [Found in Ward Thoron, The Letters of Marion Adams, 1865-1883 (Boston: Little Brown, & Co., 1936), pp. 458-459.] (Hereafter: Thoron, Letters). See also the ideas expressed throughout the works of Robert Hume, Robert Spiller, Jacob Levenson, Ernest Samuels, and George Hochfield. All of these view Adams first as an artist, then as historian, scholar, critic, et cetera. (See the appended bibliography).

of a new era in human history.⁴ However, much as many others of his time, Adams knew that the realization of happiness for all mankind was not to be effected so simply. Man must strive to obtain any bit of satisfaction he found in life, and the ultimate happiness depended on man being true to himself and to his own principles.⁵ The crux of the problem was that men were finding it almost impossible to adhere to a principled stand given the conditions in society. The changes evolving seemed sufficient to overwhelm the man who attempted to remain firm.

The changes which transformed American society in the late nineteenth century were but an extension of earlier trends. Since the days of Jefferson's Embargo, and the protectionist attitude of Calhoun, Clay, and company, the economic structure of the United States had undergone drastic alterations. The days of handicraft and small factories had drifted slowly yet perceptibly into the advent of huge corporations and harshly oppressive working conditions. However, the changes were not superficial. Many observers thought them chronic. The pursuit of happiness rapidly degenerated into the pursuit of wealth by any method, efficacy being the only criterion.

Industry received additional stimulation from the demands placed upon it when the country engaged in a war as ferocious as any throughout all history. The opportunity to make money presented itself, and the entrepreneurial class eagerly seized upon the chance to rise. The

⁴Ernest Samuels, The Young Henry Adams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948), pp. 120-167 (Hereafter: Samuels, Young Adams).

⁵This is essentially the theme of Adams' novels, Democracy and Esther; see Henry Adams, Democracy and Esther: Two Novels by Henry Adams (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1961) (Hereafter: Adams, Democracy, or Adams, Esther); Samuels, Young Adams, passim.

methods of these entrepreneurs lacked almost any ethical connotations, as has been demonstrated by most scholars of the period. Matthew Josephson and Eric Goldman present a sordid picture of a society gone mad over the "bitch goddess" of wealth.⁶ One need not look far to see the cause for alarm raised by those who deemed success dependent upon moral uprightness. The paradox contained within this viewpoint disappeared when the more reflective consulted the principles involved. But the masses, naturally interested in their immediate personal welfare, cared little if their principles were tarnished, so long as they prospered. The confusion of principle and interest marked the thought of the farmer, laborer or businessman striving to attain the material success of his more fortunate neighbor. Adams saw the error in the reasoning of those unfortunates, but failed to understand their dilemma. He had much to learn before he could appreciate the conditions imposed upon men born without the means to exist ready at their beck and call. Adams, the aristocrat by mind and means, was ill fitted to sympathize with those of a lower station in life. He knew little of the struggle for existence, but grew intellectually because of the challenges and lessons of a long life.

When Adams journeyed to Washington in 1869, he entered a political milieu already divorced from actual conditions in nineteenth century America. In his own words of a later date, Adams found that participation in politics resembled a game, a game devoid of rules embracing any

⁶Matthew Josephson, The Robber Barons (New York: Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1962), Chapters I-II (Hereafter: Josephson, Robber Barons); Eric Goldman, Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform (Revised Edition; New York: Vintage Books, 1962), Chapters I-II (Hereafter: Goldman, Destiny).

moral implications. The politician acted merely as a free agent, selling himself to the highest bidder. Voters discerned but slight difference between the two major parties, and reform remained an illusion unless those inclined toward a reforming course managed to awaken the people to the dangers inherent in irresponsible government. From 1869 to 1890, the savages of the political world played their game without reference to events in the country at large. From the scandals of the Grant administration to the retirement of Harrison, the only relief provided came during the years of honest government imposed by Grover Cleveland. However, honesty no longer served the purpose of answering the problems within the social fabric. Once entrenched, business interests reclined at their ease, awaiting the next election to put into effect again the corrupt methods that had insured success heretofore. In contrast, the farmer or the laborer believed his very existence in jeopardy, his means of support threatened by the grasping attitude of business and laissez faire government. From a feeble and inauspicious beginning, reform progressed spasmodically, going from mere sops to popular demand to some actual relief. Perhaps the only improvement witnessed during the period came in the form of civil service reform, an esoteric thing at best to people demanding a greater share of the national income. Adams, a reformer by birth and heritage under these conditions, slowly came to understand the complaints voiced by the dispossessed within the population. By birth he obtained the means to existence, and but ill appreciated the fate of those denied the benefit of being "well born." That he came to do so is evident from the char-

acter of comments made in his works and letters.⁷

The reform element toward which Adams naturally gravitated was of a unique character. Goldman has rightly labeled this group "patricians" in politics. Coming from among the "Best People" in society, these economically independent reformers felt no need for any radical departure from traditions of the past. Their emphasis upon tradition called to mind the early American tendency toward rule by the "better sort," the natural aristocrats. Their major aim consisted of a hard-headed, respectable attack on corruption as, according to their interpretation of contemporary problems, the country needed another Jeffersonian Revolution to restore uprightness to politics and society at large. They would resolve all problems, demanding nothing but that the government make use of their talents, freely given. They adhered to the old eighteenth century idea that public servants must be economically independent or sacrifice their "disinterestedness." When the latter quality disappeared, statesmanship degenerated into political jobbery. These patricians firmly believed that the United States suffered because of the subjection of good government to factional rule by powerful interest groups and demagogues. Adams found his element

⁷Goldman, Destiny, pp. 2-43; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 5-10; Josephson, Robber Barons, passim. For comparison with Josephson, see Edward C. Kirkland, Industry Comes of Age: Business, Labor, and Public Policy: 1860-1897, Volume VI of The Economic History of the United States, edited by Henry David, et al. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1961), Chapters II, VII, X, and specifically pp. 391-409 (Hereafter: Kirkland, Industry). Also see Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought: 1860-1915 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), Chapters I-III, passim (Hereafter: Hofstadter, Social Darwinism); Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform, From Bryan to F. D. R. (New York: Vintage Books, 1955), Chapters I-IV, passim (Hereafter: Hofstadter, Age of Reform).

when he joined this group of "liberals," as they chose to name themselves.⁸

The leading figures of the reform group to which Adams attached himself were Carl Schurz, a naturalized Prussian and a liberal Republican Senator from Missouri; Edwin L. Godkin, a naturalized English journalist and critic serving as editor of the Nation; Lyman Trumbull, Chicago lawyer, politician, and statesman, probably the most prominent liberal except for Schurz and C. F. Adams; Horace White, free-thinking editor of the Chicago Tribune; Samuels Bowles, editor of the Springfield Republican, always ready for a reforming crusade; Henry Watterson, cultured editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal; and Murat Halstead, who placed the Cincinnati Commercial into the liberal ranks. Schurz aided Charles Sumner, Republican Senator from Massachusetts, in the fight against Grant, and when Sumner fell under the illusive strength of the President, Schurz succeeded to the leadership of the opposition. Open hostility flared in the summer of 1871, when Schurz, on a speaking tour through the Midwest, denounced the renomination of Grant. Schurz' position called for tariff reform, removal of Federal troops from the defeated South, shoring up of the national currency, and a cleansing of government through civil service reform. The Missouri Liberals convened in January, 1872, and issued a call for a national convention to be held in the following May. Schurz happily seized upon this plea as the trumpet

⁸Goldman, Destiny, pp. 13-17. For a more comprehensive and rather altered interpretation of the "liberals," see Patrick W. Riddleberger, "The Break in the Radical Ranks: Liberals vs. Stalwarts in the Election of 1872," Journal of Negro History, XLIV (April, 1959), pp. 136-157; also, Patrick W. Riddleberger, "The Radicals' Abandonment of the Negro During Reconstruction," Journal of Negro History, XLV (April, 1960), pp. 88-102.

call to action in the formation of a third party dedicated to his reforms.⁹

From 1872 to 1884, Adams dedicated himself to political reform through active participation in one way or another. The story of his endeavors rightly belong in the chapters to follow, but the general outlines can be inferred from comments made above. The patrician reformers simply offered nothing with appeal for the common voter. What was offered? Tariff reform? Who desired tariff reform, except the farmer until he became convinced that if business prospered under protection, why not the farmer as well? Labor came to view the tariff as a direct protection, akin to restrictions on immigration and the abolition of foreign contract labor. What concrete good accrued to the common man from the proposed currency reforms of the Liberals, specifically a strict return to the gold standard? None, in the common man's opinion, and he spoke out for a freer, and more elastic monetary system -- hence the movement for more greenbacks, and later for the unlimited coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one. Adams remained dedicated to reform, but modified his position as a direct result of lessons learned during the years under study.

Part of the confusion surrounding the reform attempts of the late nineteenth century derived from the lack of clear cut distinctions as to the aim of particular reforms. Actually, reform presented two different, yet at times related, exteriors: reform to end corruption, and reform to improve conditions. Patrician reformers convinced them-

⁹Claude Moore Fuess, Carl Schurz, Reformer (1829-1906) (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1932), pp. 173-178 (Hereafter: Fuess, Schurz); Goldman, Destiny, pp. 17-20.

selves that by ending governmental corruption, all social problems would cease to trouble that part of the citizenry capable of supporting themselves, the only "worthy" citizens. The farmer and the laborer came to believe the necessity of some governmental participation in the form of regulation and control, if the common man hoped to obtain an equitable share in the national income. Patricians resisted this governmental interference, maintaining that to tinker would be to magnify existing evils. Gradually the realization grew that adjustment was mandatory. Patricians adhered to their monistic thesis of the insidious, destructive nature of political corruption until exposure of the ruthless methods of emergent business interests caused the jelling of hostile public opinion. Once public opinion solidified, reform assumed a new aspect, but not altogether dissimilar, as the initial attempts still emphasized the elimination of corrupt practices.

The political corruption of the times was symptomatic of a deeper problem within the social fabric. Optimism, inspired by the prosperity of the war years and those immediately following, blinded the populace to the signs of approaching disaster. Over-expansion in industry, construction, investment, even agriculture, was encouraged by high prices and a seemingly unlimited market. Railroads were constructed without any apparent concern for earning potential, and the government encouraged further activity with liberal subsidies. Activity on a scale as grand as this simply lacked correspondence to existent conditions within post-bellum America. The bubble had to burst when the war dislocations corrected themselves, and the "bust" came in the form of the Panic of 1873. Hardly any sector of the economy, or any section of the country escaped the effects of that holocaust triggered

by the failure of the House of Jay Cooke, investment bankers. For the first time in American history, violence called forth by economic conditions descended upon the nation.¹⁰ Strikes were called in order to combat the efforts of the huge business concerns struggling to save themselves from ruin.¹⁰

With the advent of strikes and agrarian agitation, it appeared to the patricians that America bent her efforts toward following the road to ruin which had been the downfall of Europe. The problem turned upon the re-orientation of America so that the European example would not be followed. In the patrician persuasion, the only effective way to avoid the approaching fate lay in cleaning up government, thereby cleansing society at large. The patricians felt that an unholy alliance between business and government ultimately led to the establishment of a class system, bringing with it all of the degrading effects of the rule of faction. Their dilemma intensified when society refused to hear them out, as their appeal harked back to an outmoded system, a system befitting the simple agrarian society of pre-Jacksonian days. Each section embarked upon its own course of action to avoid future evils.

After sensing European radicalism in labor and agrarian agitation, patrician reformers reacted with revulsion, for the most part, happy to allow business to dominate, barring any further subsidization. Little government became an obsession with business, when grants to railroads, protective tariffs and judicial sympathy evolved into firm

¹⁰Goldman, Destiny, pp. 24-25; Kirkland, Industry, Chapter I, passim.

accoutrements of government. Laborer and farmer alike, direly in need of assistance, thought themselves neglected or abused of more of their alleged rights. All of this sharpened the bitterness between the factions in society, and a distaste for politics developed within the ranks of the patricians. The distaste was not sufficient to restrain the most energetic from entering the fray, as can be seen from the careers of Theodore Roosevelt, Abram Hewitt and Woodrow Wilson. Their threatened sense of status required that they participate despite the inconveniences involved. These men felt that they were being replaced by an unworthy element, and deliberately fought to maintain their position. However, years elapsed before laborer and farmer realized the necessity of political action to insure their intended reforms. Adams saw the dilemma stultifying reform during the period, and he learned that beneficent reform was impossible unless the voice of a people united and dedicated to the welfare of all thundered forth in terms of a mandate. Adams devoted himself to the development of public awareness, outgrowing the former idea that virtuous government would have to be imposed from the "top down," in the words of Eric Goldman.¹¹

Adams contributed to the reform movement of the late sixties and the early seventies by producing a group of muckraking articles dedicated to the exposure of corruption within the social milieu. Hochfield and others have suggested that Adams viewed the Constitution as a sacred

¹¹Kirkland, Industry, Chapters VIII and X, *passim*; Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897, Volume V of The Economic History of the United States, edited by Henry David, *et al.* (New York & Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1945), pp. 326-328, and Chapters XIII and XIV, *passim* (Hereafter: Shannon, Frontier). For the "status revolution," see Goldman, Destiny, Chapters II and III, *passim*; and Hofstadter, Age of Reform, Chapters II-V, *passim*.

document created for the express purpose of establishing a government conducive to the inspiration of "virtue" within the citizenry. Hence his articles resounded with moral overtones, warning of the price to society if the Constitution were scrapped.¹² He believed with John, John Quincy, and Charles Francis, that prerequisites to true statesmanship forced the realization of a higher law to which all human law must conform. One sees this in each of Adams' articles, from those written in 1860-1861 to those penned during the late sixties. But a change in tone impresses the reader, a change not spelled out by Hochfield or other critics. In the "Gold Conspiracy," Adams concluded that the only seeming solution to the corruption and excessive influence of the large business concerns involved a stronger central government to cope with those new economic giants. The dilemma inherent in this course of action was also apparent to Adams. Specifically, if the central government be strengthened, then the liberties of the people would be endangered. He failed to resolve the problem, and ended the article with the question thus posed.¹³

One notes a subtle change in Adams' attitude, terminating in a concern for the liberties of the people at large in the "Gold Conspiracy" article. He posed a question crucial to all men within society. He no longer viewed the Constitution as a sacrosanct document to be

¹²For these articles see George E. Hochfield, editor, The Great Secession Winter of 1860-1861 and Other Essays by Henry Adams (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., Inc., 1963), pp. 1-32, 61-156, 191-222 (Hereafter: Hochfield, Secession Winter).

¹³Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 2-10; Henry Adams, "The New York Gold Conspiracy," taken from Charles F. Adams, Jr., and Henry Adams, Chapters of Erie (Ithaca: Great Seal Books, 1956), pp. 101-136 (Hereafter: Adams, "Gold Conspiracy").

protected at all costs, but implied the need for re-interpretation in the light of contemporary demands, a major concession if Hochfield is correct. Adams' faith in the eighteenth century liberalism of his predecessors began to crack. Subsequent dissolution of the old belief, and the ultimate formulation of a new position, consumed much time and entailed a full measure of painful mental adjustments for Adams. The new intellectual position was attained with Adams emerging as a forerunner of the Progressives of a later era. Moreover, Adams' perspective, not strictly political, embraced the whole spectrum of human activity within the developing credo, just as had been so under the old persuasion for previous Adamases. His initial error had been to accept beliefs handed to him without any reasoned inquiry into logical implications. With the seeming failure of reform predicated on the old theoretical postulate, Adams entered upon an experience novel and strange for one who had relied upon his ancestors for directives.¹⁴

When reform foundered upon the "rock" of Grantism, Adams accepted a position as Assistant Professor of Medieval History at Harvard College and the accompanying editorship of the North American Review. Adams assumed this totally alien responsibility reluctantly, claiming personal inadequacy, but family influence and apparent failure in journalism as a springboard to political fame led him to acquiesce. In the fall of 1870, Henry Adams joined the staff of Harvard to replace John Fiske, currently refused further tenure because of his irreligiousness. Van Wyck Brooks has gleefully noted that in point of irreligion,

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 101-136; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 2-10; Hofstadter, Age of Reform, pp. 174-214.

Adams was "ten times" worse than Fiske.¹⁵

Adams' career as an historian and a professor began under good auspices. He wrote his friend Charles Milnes Gaskell that he had been promised freedom to teach as he would, and had been called in only to strengthen the reformers among the faculty members.¹⁶ The reform element at Harvard followed the leadership of President Charles W. Eliot, a devotee of the German method of instruction. Oscar Cargill has suggested that Adams disapproved of the "Aryanizing tendencies of the German historians," but yielded subsequently to official pressure, accepting and following the lead of Herbert B. Adams of Johns Hopkins. Cargill theorized that Adams opposed the German method until it became a question of "surrender or perish."¹⁷ This attitude seems rather extreme, in view of Adams' dislike for the system he encountered when first beginning to teach. Moreover, Herbert B. Adams introduced his seminar at Johns Hopkins in 1876, six years after Adams started his

¹⁵Van Wyck Brooks, New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915 (n.p.: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1940), p. 261 (Hereafter: Brooks, Indian Summer); Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 11-12 (Hochfield professes to disagree but, in the main, his arguments could be used to support the contentions being made above); letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 29, 1870; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 19, 1870; letter, Charles F. Adams to Henry Adams, January 12, 1870 (from all of these, it can be inferred that Adams was convinced that he was accomplishing little of value in Washington); Oscar Cargill, Intellectual America: Ideas on the March (New York: Macmillan, 1941), p. 554 (Hereafter: Cargill, Intellectual America); Cargill suggests that C. F. Adams used his influence at Harvard to secure the appointment of his son; Cargill is emphatic about the unimportance of Adams' muckraking articles written while he was in Washington.

¹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 29, 1870.

¹⁷Cargill, Intellectual America, p. 554.

innovating career at Harvard.¹⁸ Adams wrote of his opposition to mere lecturing and promised to change the method of instruction and substitute his own system. His system seems to have been a form of the German seminar procedure, at least so his students have affirmed, as have the biographers of Adams and his contemporaries.¹⁹

The Harvard atmosphere into which Adams moved was rarefied and cultivated. Brooks depicts a brilliant coterie of men who grouped together to criticize each other and to discuss the theories of the moment. The ideas developing in Adams' mind during this period must have received some stimulation from the choice associates provided him by the Harvard experience. The Jameses (Henry, Senior, William and Henry) were there, but the two intellectual giants were Chauncey Wright and Charles Peirce, both adhering to Peirce's dictum to think "things" rather than words. Charles E. Norton provided stimulation in the study of medievalism, while the Holmeses, junior and senior, complemented the group. All of these men doubted the validity of any preconceived notions of good, evil, art or life, distrusted abstractions and suspected all generalizations. They chose to work with facts, and in doing so to formulate "real" ideas about the nature of life and living. Adams could not have

¹⁸Oscar Handlin, "History of American History," found in Oscar Handlin, et al., Harvard Guide to American History (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 1960), pp. 3-7 (Hereafter: Handlin, Harvard Guide).

¹⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 25, 1870; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 10, 1870. See also Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 2-13; Charles Franklin Thwing, "Henry Adams," found in Charles Franklin Thwing, Guides, Philosophers and Friends: Studies of College Men (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1927), pp. 223-236 (Hereafter: Thwing, "Henry Adams"). See also the studies made of Adams' life and work by Hume, Levenson, Stevenson, Samuels and Brooks; Owen Wister, Roosevelt, The Story of a Friendship: 1880-1919 (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1930), pp. 147-152 (Hereafter: Wister, Roosevelt).

selected a more distinguished group of co-workers.²⁰

There were also the Agassizes, Louis and Alexander, Asa Gray, and, in 1872, William Graham Sumner injected a new attitude into the atmosphere at Yale, the long-time rival of Harvard for intellectual leadership. University teaching was undergoing a transformation as revolutionary as the changes occurring in society at large. Men began to insist that a college education be directed toward developing the students, allowing them to realize their full potential. The old and traditional methods crumbled before the doubt and skepticism deriving from the scientific necessity to verify facts, the accredited mode of scholarship which few men ventured to ignore. Even such divines as Noah Porter professed allegiance to the scientific method, although he implied that it was a misleading rationalization of what had existed for centuries. Rationalization or not, the tone of the late nineteenth century was scientific in scrupulous regard for facts. Method, scientific and empirical, rang the cry that echoed through the halls of the academic world. One no longer modified the facts to conform with his particular interpretation of phenomena, material or spiritual, past or present. Men's concern for the specifics of existence in order to explain the whole assumed new vitality and direction. A scholar started with the idea that some significance could be discerned by gathering and working the facts into a conformation yielding a concept of their relations to each other and to the life processes. The motivating stimulus urged the development of some intelligible explanation for the

²⁰Brooks, *Indian Summer*, pp. 257-261; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 22, 1871; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 20, 1871.

universe either conforming to or refuting the implications extracted from the expansion of Darwinian theory.²¹

Richard Hofstadter affirms that Darwinian theory had been generally accepted by the middle of the seventies, at least the basic idea of evolution. Adams and his associates forcibly came to terms with an idea not wholly novel, but vastly disruptive to traditional ideas of a static universe and the validity of any absolute conceptions. The scientists of the late nineteenth century exhibited little certitude that the direction in which Darwinism seemed to point promised any measure of beneficent results to mankind. The question plaguing the more thoughtful hinged on whether a design existed in Nature and, if so, could it be discerned. Physicists gradually found that a perusal of facts seemed to lead to infinite multiplicity, and some biologists doubted that design in fact existed. Of course, the concern for design worried specifically those who attempted to apply the new scientific postulates to society. The late nineteenth century marked attempts to

²¹Andrew D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science With Theology in Christendom (Volumes I and II, First Edition; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1896), passim (Hereafter: White, Warfare); Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, Chapters I-II, passim; Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 257-261; Noah Porter, The Human Intellect: With an Introduction Upon Psychology and the Soul (Fourth Edition; New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1873), passim, and specifically p. 492 (Hereafter: Porter, Intellect); Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 82-107 (Hereafter: Commager, American Mind); Richard Hofstadter, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 2-70 (Hereafter: Hofstadter, Higher Education); Ernest Earnest, Academic Procession: An Informal History of the American College, 1636 to 1953 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1953), pp. 140, 168, 216, and 140-220, passim (Hereafter: Earnest, Procession). One can obtain a critical assessment of the progress in higher education by looking into two books written by Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (1899) and The Higher Learning in America (1918).

formulate sciences of society, history, literature and art. The initial impetus came from the biological sciences and then ramified to include science in general. Thus, Adams began with a concern for biology and geology, and gravitated to physics. Adams accepted the position of the elder Agassiz, thereby denying the uniform evolution of earth and specie, and affirming that the earth had passed through catastrophic stages of change. He exercised considerable caution before rejecting or accepting the theory of evolution, but seemed to modify it with an idea of a designing absolute.²²

The problem of design intrigued and frustrated men such as Herbert Spencer and William Graham Sumner. John Fiske followed Spencer in the application of biological theory to society, as did Sumner. Noah Porter and Henry Adams hesitated skeptically before approving the particular application made by Spencer and Sumner. Joining Porter and Adams, at times anticipating them, emerged the group of modern social scientists and economists led by Lester Frank Ward, Thorstein Veblen, John Bates Clark and Richard T. Ely, fascinated by Darwinian theory and hoping to find a more effective method of application by tracing the evolution of institutions. Adams apparently belonged with this group of "reform" Darwinists who admitted an evolutionary development, but refused to concede that it was uncontrollable. Their particular concern centered in

²²Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, Chapter I, passim; William Jorcy, Henry Adams: Scientific Historian (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), passim, especially the last chapter; Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946), pp. 396-415; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 26, 77, 170-182, 229-230, 208-255, 315-333; Timothy Paul Donovan, Henry Adams and Brooks Adams: The Education of Two American Historians (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 37-38 (Hereafter: Donovan, Henry Adams); Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 2-10.

tracing the evolution of society, and in the application of lessons obtained to plan for the future. From this attitude arose their scrupulous regard for plain facts, even though they seemed to miss the implication involved when they interpreted these accumulated facts. Adams learned (through the course of the twenty years under study) that a science of anything as ephemeral as human nature and thought was by implication subjective. That he should insist that it was actually scientific is inconceivable after one peruses his works.²³

The tone of a society dedicated to the acquisition of wealth and the discovery of scientific laws seemed almost obscene to intellectuals with an artistic bent. Brooks has suggested that the disillusionment expressed by many of the late nineteenth century artistic and literary figures derived from the lack of sensibility in society at large. The artistically inclined intellectual of the period found in modern society

²³Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 114, 136-139; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 170-182, 208-255, 315-333; Handlin, Harvard Guide, pp. 6-7; Porter, Intellect, p. 492 and Part IV, passim; Goldman, Destiny, pp. 67-124; J. C. Levenson, The Mind and Art of Henry Adams (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1957), passim, as this is Levenson's major thesis (Hereafter: Levenson, Adams); Robert Spiller, "Henry Adams," found in Robert E. Spiller, et al. editors, Literary History of the United States (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 1080-1103 (Hereafter: Spiller, "Henry Adams"); Robert A. Hume, Runaway Star: An Appreciation of Henry Adams (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951), "Conclusion" (Hereafter: Hume, Runaway Star); Thwing, "Henry Adams," pp. 223-236. See also William Graham Sumner, Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals (New York: The New American Library, 1960), passim, and especially his introductory chapter (Hereafter: Sumner, Folkways); White, Warfare, passim; Herbert Spencer, The Principles of Ethics (Volumes I and II; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1898), passim; Morton White, Social Thought in America, The Revolt Against Formalism (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), pp. 3-46; Thorstein Veblen, The Theory of the Leisure Class (New Edition; New York: The Modern Library, 1934), passim; Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, Chapter I, passim, specifically, pp. 7-15. Adams' position is confirmed by a perusal of Mont-Saint-Michel, the Education, and the History.

perhaps the most corrupt attributes in the history of man. They saw that every man stood against the world, and placed his individual welfare above that of society in general. Many deemed this a regression to that synthetic state of nature which had been a cherished metaphor of the eighteenth century. From this vantage point, the view of Hobbes and his cohorts approached reality, with the higher potential of man thereby denied. Life became indeed "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." No man worried himself about the future, but thought only of the fulfillment of his immediate desires.²⁴

By way of association and observation, Adams shared this general disillusionment. One notes this attitude expressed in virtually every letter Adams wrote after reaching manhood. He continually alluded to the "degraded" state of society, and doubted that anything of value could ever arise out of that atmosphere of corruption and moral lassitude. The attitude assumed permanence in Adams, as he expressed the same thoughts in 1918 as in 1887. But, there was a marked difference in Adams' reaction to the degradation. Adams conceived of himself as the social critic in the widest sense of that role, and dedicated his efforts toward promoting an awareness within society so as to induce reform. His initial training was obtained while at Harvard as a teacher of young men. This interpretation seems to suggest that Adams left Harvard only to broaden the scope of his effectiveness and coverage. He wrote history, literature and polemic treatises with the same idea

²⁴This is a generalization, and, as usual, is over-drawn, with no claim that humanitarianism was non-existent. A perusal of Gabriel and Commanger soon dispels any such conception. Hofstadter, in Social Darwinism treats the "reform" Darwinists comprehensively. What is alluded to above is the attitude of the artistic elite of the period.

in mind. Behind every seeming condemnation of society stood this principled creed which he never rejected, but expanded and revised in the light of contemporary conditions. He used the materials available to him, and used them in any fashion which promised results. His attitude of "Voltairean raillery" became a permanent mark of his personality, and no individual or institution peremptorily escaped the threat of his caustic pen or voice. Harvard provided the education and the basic skills, and life provided the materials with which to work. Adams learned well, and applied his education to the pursuit of man's highest goal, the betterment of mankind.²⁵

Acting under the weight of heritage and the example set by illustrious ancestors, Adams first turned to politics for a stage upon which to launch his reforming efforts. In the Education, he related the lessons derived from his neophyte experiences in Washington. Ill fated as the endeavor appeared, Adams received valuable training that stood him in good stead when he joined the Liberal Republican effort to oust Grant and impose a reforming course upon the country. He formed contacts that placed him among the leaders of the reformers, but he never

²⁵Thwing, "Henry Adams," pp. 223-236; Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 199, 257-261, 449; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, January 22, 1872; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887; Wister, Roosevelt, pp. 147-152; Hume, Runaway Star, "Conclusion"; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 136-139, 140-144; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 315-333; Brooks Adams, editor, The Degradation of Democratic Dogma (New York: Macmillan Co., 1919), passim, including the introduction by Brooks Adams; Commager, American Mind, pp. 132-140; James Truslow Adams, Henry Adams (New York: A & C. Boni, Inc., 1933), passim; Henry Adams, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography (Sentry Edition: Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1961), passim, and especially page 498 (Hereafter: Adams, Education); Henry Adams, Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1959), passim (Hereafter: Adams, Chartres).

attained the recognition as a leader for which he felt himself qualified by birth, tradition and talent. Yet Adams only partially managed to escape the fatal attraction exerted upon his mind by the thought of a political career.

CHAPTER I

"POLITICS ARE A VERY UNSATISFACTORY GAME"

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Grant's administration outraged every rule of ordinary decency,
But scores of promising men, whom the country could not well
spare, were ruined in saying so.¹

Perhaps no other words better expressed Adams' view of the Grant administration. In his opinion the country suffered a great tragedy by being denied access to the talent of her citizenry. The tremendous "free fight" that occurred in Washington, in 1869-70, demonstrated the power of Grant, but it also exposed an extreme simplicity of personality more exasperating than "the complexity of a Talleyrand."² Adams failed to heed the advice of his practical father, who counselled that "This transition state of politics is not the one in which anybody not mixed up with it could do anything useful by taking a side."³ Instead the young political aspirant bestirred himself to join that group of reformers who thought that they could succeed where Charles Sumner and Salmon P. Chase had failed, in defeating Grant.

The "free fight" in Congress had turned on the questions of Santo Domingo, legal tender, and the investigation of the sale of munitions during the war. Sumner, then Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, had, for the moment, defeated Grant's aspirations for the

¹Adams, Education, p. 280.

²Ibid., p. 276.

³Letter, Charles F. Adams to Henry Adams, January 19, 1870.

annexation of Santo Domingo, but in doing so had sacrificed his position in the Senate. The strength of the President was demonstrated when the Republican leadership denied Sumner his previous chairmanship, in 1871, on the grounds that he could no longer work with the administration. With Sumner removed from this powerful post, the leadership of the Liberal Republicans slipped into the hands of Carl Schurz, Senator from Missouri. Schurz, with a reputation for reform, represented the ideal of a Liberal Republican. His major emphasis dictated that moral standards should be maintained and upheld in public service. To him came the patrician forces sensing in his leadership the impetus to propel them along the avenue to power and subsequent reform of government.

The patrician politicians grouped around Schurz imbibed the ideas of eighteenth century liberalism. They felt that public servants remained public servants only so long as they were "disinterested." Government degenerated into political jobbery as soon as men won elections on promises to represent the various interests in the country at large. The patricians theoretically solved the problem of corruption, so apparent in the seventies, by divorcing politics from individual interests, and insisting that the moral uprightness of a man decided his fitness for public office. Government officials would have to be economically independent and motivated by a desire to limit government activity to the obstruction of palpable injustices. Those men incapable of shedding their private interests upon entering public service were to be turned out of office, and the government re-orientated and set upon the road marked out by Jefferson and Madison. The evils of factional government were to be avoided by allowing only the best of men to hold public office. The "Best People," the patricians, those reformers who

grouped about Schurz, these Liberals believed in a relatively simple solution, as they ingenuously required that the country accept their services, freely offered, honorably intentioned.⁴

In January, 1871, Adams urged David A. Wells to provide a definite statement of the party's financial plank as Jacob Cox had done for civil service aims. He worried about the success of party goals because of the effort required. The difficulties which Adams foresaw could be overcome if Grant did not involve the country in a foreign war. Grant's continuing designs in Santo Domingo offered the greatest source of worry to Adams, as irrational actions in that very explosive situation could sabotage the reform effort by necessitating unity in support of war.⁵ But the war did not materialize, and neither did the reforms. Even as early as March, Adams doubted that reform would ever be accomplished.⁶

In the summer of 1871, Schurz, while on a speaking tour through the Midwest, came out strongly in opposition to the re-nomination of Grant. The public reaction to his speeches appeared encouraging, and he returned to the Senate to continue his agitation for the reforms dear to his heart and to the Liberals who followed him. In his speeches, Schurz laid out a pattern for future reform should the Liberals accede to power. In addition to the currency and civil service reforms, Schurz called for the removal of Federal troops from the re-constructed South.

⁴Goldman, Destiny, pp. 10-17; Fuess, Schurz, pp. 173-174; Josephson, Robber Barons, pp. 350-352; Martin B. Duberman, Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886 (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960), pp. 352-353 (Hereafter: Duberman, Adams).

⁵Letter, Henry Adams to David A. Wells, January 17, 1871.

⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 13, 1871.

Pervading all of these worthy goals, the idea that limited government was the only workable arrangement in a democratic republic dealt lethal yet visionary blows at Grantism. All of the degrading tendencies would be effaced from the political countenance of the country.⁷

In 1870, Adams wrote of success in the reform movement, and felt certain that the reformers could teach Grant much about currency reform. With the passage of another year, the idealism disappeared from Adams' letters. In December, 1871, he spoke of having dodged a political meeting in Washington. He announced his retirement into ". . . provincial professordom with anguish . . ." and struggle.⁸ All of his efforts at reform had been adusted by that cohesive spirit which had characterized party politics since the era of Jackson. The failure of immediate action had somewhat disillusioned this representative of an outmoded political credo that combined the conservatism of John Adams with the liberalism of Thomas Jefferson. The great problem facing the politicians and citizenry in late nineteenth century America, in Adams' view, turned upon overcoming the leveling tendencies inherently a part of a democratic system, while preserving the equality and opportunity of the people. Adamases had never been confident of success in this effort, hence Adamases repeatedly supported a republican form of government as opposed to a strict democracy. Henry Adams followed no variant from the regular course of Adams thought, at least in this respect. Those reforms garnering his support were essentially conservative. He placed little trust in the ability of the average man to select the best from

⁷Fuess, Schurz, pp. 176-178.

⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 21, 1871.

a group of candidates, as was apparent from the opinion he expressed upon the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870.⁹

The year of 1872 offered further and advanced education for one willing to learn. Adams, far from the center of political activity at this time, as he had accepted a professorship at Harvard and the editor's position with the North American Review, still looked and yearned.

Harold Cater, with acute insight, has said that journalism represented always a means to an end for Henry Adams.¹⁰ Through journalistic endeavor, Adams hoped to launch a brilliant political career. The heritage bestowed upon Adams made it almost mandatory that he strive for public office, as service had been a tradition in the family. In January, Adams journeyed to Albany in preparation ". . . for future literary and political experiments."¹¹ The specific plans called for a combination against Grant in the coming presidential contest.

While Adams laid plans for "future literary and political experiments," the Missouri Liberal Republicans convened in St. Louis and issued a call for a national convention to be held in the following May. Schurz eagerly took up the cry, and received yeoman assistance from the "Quadrilateral" -- a facetious misnomer bestowed upon that group of distinguished newspaper editors including Murat Halstead, Horace White,

⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, July 25, 1870. "I am rather amused to see how little Europe is really changed by what we call progress. Louis XIV himself never did anything more arbitrary, and certainly nothing in so dishonest a form. What a fine thing universal suffrage is."

¹⁰Harold D. Cater, Henry Adams and His Friends, A Collection of His Unpublished Letters (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p. xi (Hereafter: Cater, Henry Adams).

¹¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles F. Adams, January 7, 1872.

Henry Watterson and Samuel Bowles -- and E. L. Godkin. The Convention assembled in Cincinnati on May 1, and witnessed the launching of a new party. Schurz and his adherents came out emphatically for the nomination of Charles F. Adams, with a platform embodying the reforms they had been advocating since 1868. However, the opposition to Grant was not altogether as honorable as Schurz and his fellows would have it. Dissident groups joined the reformers, but felt little inclination to allow the visionary Liberals to spoil an opportunity for personal advancement. At the time that Schurz and the "Quadrilateral" members declaimed in ingenuous and noble terms of upright and disinterested service, David Davis, millionaire real estate speculator, provided the usual treats that presidential aspirants have been wont to offer when their candidacies appear in doubt. The Schurz forces managed to destroy the threat from the Davis faction, but at this critical juncture, Francis Blair and B. Gratz Brown arrived from Missouri to machinate against the reformers. Brown, a Liberal by opportunity, combined a superb political sense with considerable managerial skill, and the fate of the Adams-Trumbull nomination never rested in doubt after this practical politician assumed control of the opposition. Brown resented the growing power of Schurz, since he aspired to the political favor of the "sovereign state" of Missouri, and honestly felt that an Adams lacked appeal to a wide segment of the electorate. The political intrigue of Brown's strategy culminated in the nomination of Horace Greeley, with Brown himself named as the vice-presidential nominee.

The reformers accepted the outcome of the convention with disgruntled misgivings. Godkin exceeded many in the violence of his opposition, but the majority of the Liberals ultimately supported the

ticket. They reasoned that if Democrats could support as good a Republican as Greeley, then Republicans certainly should not hesitate. Greeley was or had been associated with so many reforming causes that his stand on any given issue mystified close observers, without considering the mass of voters. Two things appeared certain, that Greeley considered all Democrats as essentially vile objects of contempt and that opposition to protective tariffs represented to him the height of idiocy. Many Liberals accepted the ticket, but remained convinced that had Adams and Trumbull received the party sanction, the election would have been an assured Liberal triumph. Henry Adams, perhaps the most dissatisfied Liberal of the lot, never reconciled himself to the candidacy of Greeley and Brown.¹²

In Adams' opinion, Charles F. Adams offered the best qualifications as the candidate to oppose Grant, but he hesitated about the advisability of supporting the old gentleman for the independent ticket. Here it is possible to note a subtle shift in Adams' attitude. "That one's father should be President is well enough, but it is as much as his life is worth, and I look with great equanimity upon the event of the choice falling on some other man."¹³ As usual, Adams displayed a certain amount of ambivalence, for when Greeley loomed as the choice of the people, Adams stood ready to ". . . give it up." If the "Gods" inclined to favor Greeley, Adams professed a willingness to acquiesce, but

¹²Goldman, Destiny, pp. 16-23; Fuess, Schurz, pp. 185-186, 189-198; two letters written by Marion Adams, one to Edward W. Hooper of October 12, 1872, and one to Ellen Gurney of October 27, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 48, 54); Duberman, Adams, pp. 352-372.

¹³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 27, 1872.

he still believed that Charles Francis Adams had ". . . narrowly escaped being our next president."¹⁴

The paradoxical attitude in Adams' mind originated in the realization that his father had been overlooked by an unappreciative public. Adams himself could recommend that his father withdraw from the contest, but for the politicians to do so constituted an act that seemed to him almost treasonous. An Adams was always the best man, regardless, and perhaps because, of the opposition. The price of service had been high, but Adamses had been willing to pay. Pursuit of private interests compared as nothing to meritorious public service. The degeneracy of contemporary politics made it impossible for the value of the Adams qualifications to be realized. "How can it be appreciated in an age . . . so degraded as ours?"¹⁵ Adams was not yet ready to give up all hope, for he decided that the future held some promise of successful reform. Moreover, if the Adamses deserted the cause, it would suffer a decisive lack of effective leadership. Greeley would be ". . . not only disgraced but beaten."¹⁶ Another year, another election promised to provide the opportunity for which Adams had waited so long. He might not have wanted office himself, but he felt that the Adams clan exhibited excessive talent to be refused eventual recognition.

The times were not right for a complex of reasons. The opposition would soon destroy itself by its own excesses, besides Greeley did not

¹⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 30, 1872.

¹⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, January 22, 1872; essentially, Adams was speaking of just what is being emphasized above.

¹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 30, 1872.

represent much of a force in American politics. The common ". . . branch of democracy . . .," never very stable, required enlightened leadership if any progress was to be made.¹⁷ For the moment, Adams satisfied himself by attending to more personal matters. In June of 1872 he married Marion Hooper and embarked for a honeymoon in Europe shortly thereafter. Hence he could wait for a better time and comfort himself with the thought that he had made the "evil ones" in Washington feel the effects of his vitriolic pen and voice.¹⁸ Adams felt secure in his political optimism when he traveled about Europe during the major part of the years 1872-73.

The honeymoon occupied Adams for over a year. It seems apparent that he retained his interest in reform, but chose to bide his time for a more propitious moment. Nevertheless, his attitude toward politics altered almost imperceptibly as the days and months passed and he came more to realize the value of a life divorced from the rather repulsive requirements of practical politics. In April, 1873, he chided Gaskell ". . . for becoming so political. . . ."¹⁹

To eat with one's knife, to be made a co-respondent, or to talk politics, are acts or misfortunes which society cannot overlook . . . If . . . [he] . . . consented to appear indifferent on a matter which is properly considered to be at the foundation of sociology . . . ,

¹⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles F. Adams, October 13, 1872. There is also an interesting condemnation of political opportunism in a letter of August 29, 1872, to Charles M. Gaskell. See also letters of Marion Adams to Ellen Gurney, October 27, 1872, and to her father, November 5, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 54-56).

¹⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 22, 1873; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 30, 1872; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 23, 1872.

¹⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 22, 1873.

he did so by compromising his personal integrity without benefit.²⁰ From the initial enthusiasm of the sixties and early seventies, Adams developed a strong distaste for the practice of politics. He expressed the urge to avoid political endeavor, but caught up by a compelling attraction, he failed to dissociate himself from the corruptive participation that both fascinated and disgusted him. His concern for personal integrity undermined the urge to follow in the footsteps of his forbears. Adams faced a personal quandary that ultimately involved considerable adjustment no matter the course he selected. Much of his inconsistency of practice and expression derived from a seemingly insolvable paradox that kept him swinging between the prongs of a moral dilemma. He simply failed to decide, and his subsequent actions assumed an indecisive, weak-willed quality because of his inability to face up to a problem pregnant with implications for his future activities.²¹

Adams undoubtedly shared the horror of his father and Thurlow Weed at the thought of a third term for Grant, but he launched most of his comments at the effects of poor administration rather than at persons.²² For instance, he seemed to imply that the financial conditions of the depression of 1873 resulted inevitably from the heretofore failure of reform. Reform required more than a mere change of administration.²³

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid. Also, see the letters written during the years 1873-1876, in which Adams professed a desire to quit politics, yet continually committed himself to political activity.

²²Letter, Thurlow Weed to Charles F. Adams, July 26, 1873.

²³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1874.

All things were not "becoming," whether economic or political.²⁴ When, on December 8, 1873, Adams could see the depression giving way, it appeared that war over Cuba might be imminent ". . . tomorrow instead of today." The war would come, of that Adams remained quite certain.²⁵ Grant appeared bent upon getting the United States into trouble somewhere, as if the domestic situation were not bad enough. Reform would get its chance, and the time approached with each act of indiscretion perpetrated upon a docile public by the machine politicians in Washington.

The impression that America desperately needed reform grew on Adams as the events of 1874 slowly passed into history. In late March he bemoaned the fact that his side lost in each political contest. Because of that handicap, he affirmed his intention to assume a neutral course and espouse no cause, meaning not a word he said.²⁶ The corruption and incompetence of American politicians became increasingly apparent. Politics developed along lines ". . . more and more sordid and aimless."²⁷ Never before in the history of America had such a level of degeneracy been witnessed. In all other respects the country thrived, but Adams felt the need for re-orientation in political affairs.²⁸ Believing that capable men would ultimately answer the call of America and provide the leadership required, in October, 1874, he wrote that

²⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 12, 1873.

²⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 26, 1873; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 8, 1873.

²⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 26, 1874.

²⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 22, 1874.

²⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, July 6, 1874.

thoughtful leadership seemed to be gaining in politics.²⁹ The question therefore became whether Henry Adams himself would enter the fray, but "Politics are a very unsatisfactory game."³⁰ Adams felt the attraction of tradition and personal inclination. He hesitated because the rules of the game seemed to have lost all meaning.

Adams expressed his idea of the perfect career as that of a "free lance" with the press "to work in." Public service displayed a wretched front because of the "insecurity" which inevitably accompanied elections.³¹ Politics became even meaner because of the "nasty little personal fights. . .," such as the one engendered in Massachusetts by the death of Charles Sumner.³² Only France and Spain, of all civilized countries, rivalled the disgusting political record of the United States. The "barbaric simplicity" of many of the legislators both repelled and fascinated Adams. He recalled experiencing the same sensation when contemplating the attributes of the Bedouin tribes of Africa. The utter lack of a moral standard transformed the American political scene into a gladiatorial arena, where the combatants battled tooth and nail. A struggle ideally dedicated to the betterment of society was drastically altered into a skirmish for private gain instead.³³

And he was not at all sure that the coming election would bring

²⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 31, 1874.

³⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 26, 1874.

³¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1874.

³²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 26, 1874.

³³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1874; Goldman, Destiny, Chapters I-II, especially pp. 10-11; Josephson, Robber Barons, pp. 315-346.

any improvement. A ". . . crowd of new men [would come] into office . . .," but one could not safely predict that they would be any different from those going out. American politicians were ". . . a feeble kind of forcibles, still it . . . gives one a lofty sense of one's own importance to be able to smile contemptuously on men in high places. But the more I see of official life here [Washington], the less I am inclined to wish to enter it."³⁴ This ambiguous attitude brought Adams to live in Washington, but kept him from remaining in the ranks of the active politicians.³⁵

Adams conceived of his role in politics as that of a critic who could wield power from behind the scenes, and through the press.³⁶ The reforms dear to his heart have been previously mentioned, and it is obvious that he was as yet neither revolutionary nor radical in his political position. Rather Adams searched for order and method in society and government. There are indications that Adams was aware of the trend of things, as can be seen from the statements made in a letter written to Robert Cunliffe in 1874. He looked to the future when the laboring and capitalist classes would make up the liberal and conservative groups, respectively. At that time a clean sweep of institutions would occur. However, Adams conveniently pushed this occurrence into the remote future. Before the change could be made, a conservative

³⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1874.

³⁵Little evidence has been exposed which would corroborate the assumption that Adams feared defeat. However, the theory is quite logical, i.e., the egotistical fear of public scandal could have included political defeat as well. Perhaps the disgust for the sordidness of practical politics provides a better foundation, and is easily proven.

³⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1874.

reaction must pervade the country.³⁷ Another indication of Adams' moderation could be extracted from his reaction to the women's rights movement. He noted with pleasure the scandal involving Henry Ward Beecher and a Mrs. T. Tilden. Beecher was abortively sued by Theodore Tilden on grounds of alienating the affections of his wife. Both Beecher and Mrs. Tilden were intimates of the women's rights group, and the scandal, vulgar and objectionable as it was, spelled disaster for the entire effort -- a "joyful riddance" that never materialized.³⁸ Perhaps, without distorting the facts, a close analogy suggests itself between Adams' views on lecturing to students ". . . who are compelled to be present" and his political beliefs.³⁹ Adams could at least be sure of being heard, whereas in politics, he was ignored. He much preferred teaching under conditions of that nature to practicing politics under existent conditions. However, the analogy must not be taken to extremes, as Adams retained his faith in the efficacy of reform.

The preliminary battles for reform raged forth in 1875. Adams committed himself fully in this momentous year, and threw the Review behind the forces of reform with a fierce determination to win. Early in January an anti-administration rally was staged in Boston, and from that time until after the independent victory in Ohio, Adams busied himself begging exposé articles and agitating for the reform cause.⁴⁰ He professed amusement at the ease with which ". . . mankind is led by

³⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, July 6, 1874.

³⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 18, 1874.

³⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 22, 1874.

⁴⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 15, 1875.

the nose." Facetiously claiming to be the founder of the party, he enthusiastically proclaimed the party strong enough to ". . . decide the election of 1876." He manipulated from behind the scenes, but confessed that "I am losing me my self-respect. . . ." ⁴¹ He took heart from the public denunciations of Grant, but a flaw in the reform conspiracy loomed in an unexpected quarter. At the convention in New York, Schurz and a majority of the party declared for the candidacy of Charles F. Adams. Henry Adams professed fear of such a move and contended that the interests of reform would be better served by an opportunistic course of action. The Liberals should offer their support to either of the two major parties, depending on which would offer concessions to them. ⁴²

In April, Schurz, Godkin, Jacob Cox, Halstead, Bowles and Henry Adams dined together to discuss strategy for the coming presidential election. What they decided can only be inferred from later developments, as no record of the proceedings has been found. Schurz left soon afterward for Germany, and Adams returned to his teaching. But plans took shape, and the Liberals looked on the Ohio elections as a test of strength. The Ohio Democrats nominated a solid candidate in William Allen, an honest individual but somewhat tainted by his complacent attitude toward "sound currency." The Republicans aligned behind Rutherford B. Hayes, lawyer, Civil War veteran and former governor. Schurz, from Germany, advocated an independent stand, supporting neither of the

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 15, 1875; letter, Henry Adams to David A. Wells, April 16, 1875; letter, Henry Adams to David A. Wells, April 20, 1875; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 24, 1875.

candidates. Schurz' importance, aside from his personal qualities, derived from his influence among the German-American voters in the country, and especially in the Midwest.

After a period of quiescence, the Liberals decided to support Hayes who had a mild reputation for reform. C. F. Adams wrote Schurz requesting that he hurry back to Ohio and put Hayes into the governor's mansion, thereby giving "the whole shape" to the coming presidential election. Schurz offered little aversion toward returning to the party fold, so long as only upright and reforming candidates were nominated. He had C. F. Adams in mind as the presidential candidate for 1876, and though he hastened to Ohio and campaigned for Hayes as governor, did not consider Hayes for the presidency until forced to at a much later date.⁴³

The lessons of 1875 induced the confidence which motivated Adams in the days immediately following. The independents emerged victorious in the Ohio contest, a happy circumstance ascribable to the tireless and influential efforts of Schurz. However, Adams remained the victim of that customary ambivalence. He doubted and predicted ". . . a new division of parties and a new assortment of party leaders. . ." if the independents were defeated.⁴⁴ He stood committed, and could not honorably withdraw to Europe this time. No amount of rationalization could justify defection in 1876. He suffered from a seige of doubt as to the possibility of a Liberal victory, and reiterated the pessimistic qualms of

⁴³Fuess, Schurz, pp. 216-219; Duberman, Adams, pp. 390-393; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 4, 1875.

⁴⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, August 31, 1875; letter Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 4, 1875.

previous years.⁴⁵ But the issue could not be avoided, barring a disruption of the entire independent movement. The election of 1876 would decide Adams' political career, and his nervousness resulted from having assumed an unequivocal position.

In retrospect, Adams viewed the reform movement of 1876 as a colossal failure. All it had accomplished was to force the Republicans to nominate ". . . Hayes of Ohio, a third-rate nonentity whose only recommendation is that he is obnoxious to no one."⁴⁶ Early in the election year, Adams had noted that politics were ". . . miserably out of joint. . ." and lifeless. The reform group suffered a lack of leadership and broke completely out of control, inclining toward the candidacy of former Secretary of Treasury Bristow. Adams had prophesied doom in the near future.⁴⁷ His anxiety proved well founded, and by June, he admitted utter and disastrous defeat.

In a sequence of events that on the surface revealed Adams as a petulant, inconsistent politician, Adams' character as a political strategist pathetically emerged. The regular Republicans convened in early June, 1876, and the struggle over candidates and platform assumed moderate proportions because of the necessity to avoid a party split. A conciliatory spirit, in the face of expediency, motivated the party leaders. Blaine's reputation suffered almost irreparable damage in the "Mulligan letters" exposé, and the Grant administration's record of fraud and corruption awakened a previously lethargic public. Schurz,

⁴⁵Letter, Henry Adams to David A. Wells, April 20, 1875; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 4, 1875.

⁴⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 14, 1876.

⁴⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 9, 1876.

Adams, and other Liberals had declared that support for any candidate hinged upon pledges of reform. Adams even insisted that Bristow be named or he would withhold support from the Republican Party.⁴⁸ Consequently, a potential reformer, Rutherford B. Hayes, received the nod to carry the party laurels in the coming fray.

Two weeks after the Republican Convention, the Democrats met to nominate Samuel Tilden on a reform ticket that denounced Grantism in outspoken terms. With two men of unstained records in the field, the Liberals acclaimed their success in deciding elections. For some, success came hard, as it spelled the end of third party existence. When the major parties conceded to reform demands, the third party disintegrated by way of fusion with the traditional parties. Adams shared the sentiments of this latter group, and he viewed the entire spectacle as a grand fiasco, a comedy of errors. Schurz conferred with Hayes to extract pledges of civil service, tariff, currency and reconstruction reforms, and once obtained, reverted to old party affiliations. Subsequently he campaigned exuberantly for Hayes. Some intimated that Schurz succumbed to the bribe of a cabinet position, and the impression of fiasco intruded ever more forcefully.⁴⁹

To Adams, the only effective result of the fiasco had been to expose a certain amount of corruption. "But our people seem as yet quite callous, . . . [No] . . . storm of popular disgust is impending."⁵⁰

⁴⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Carl Schurz, February 14, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 274-277).

⁴⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Henry Cabot Lodge, September 4, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 299); Fuess, Schurz, pp. 220, 223-227; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876; Duberman, Adams, pp. 390-393.

⁵⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 14, 1876.

The finality of defeat came in July when Schurz defected to the regular Republican ranks. Adams and the other Liberals were left "smiling" at the traces, and Charles F. Adams could choose either to abandon the cause, or run as the nominee of a party that hated him against the nominees of the opposition who also hated him. Henry Adams concluded that all parties ". . . are impossibly corrupt and the public is indifferent."⁵¹ He refused to vote for Hayes, but insisted that he would not vote against him either. Instead he elected to vote for Tilden, the Democratic nominee, but, by some mental legerdemain, held that this was not a vote against Hayes. Tilden was simply the best man and a reformer at that.⁵² Adams prepared the October issue of the Review as an historical monument in that it surveyed the political decadence in America. He meant to keep the cause alive, but "mildly" he hoped. In his mind, ". . . croaking is little better than confessing to being a bore."⁵³ He meant to invoke public awareness, now assured that reform was otherwise visionary.

Disaster came in a strange form in 1876. Adams ostensibly advocated just what happened, yet when it materialized, he dissented. Again, as in 1872, his father was left in the lurch. Politicians, apparently, were completely faithless, yet it seemed hardly possible that the Adams virtues could be overlooked so often, and so unanimously. The paradox in Adams assumed clear features in 1876, much as did his political

⁵¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

⁵²Letter, Henry Adams to David A. Wells, July 15, 1876.

⁵³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 14, 1876; Henry Adams, "The 'Independents' in the Canvass," North American Review, CXXIII (October, 1876), pp. 426-467 (Hereafter: Adams, "Canvass"); Adams maintained that by electing Tilden, Liberals could force the Republicans into an attitude of reform.

aspirations. If reform constituted the major object, either of the regular candidates should have been acceptable. Both displayed, if not excellent, then at least clean records. The best explanation for Adams' disenchantment seems to be that he had favored the nomination of his father, and came out against such an occurrence on the assumption that opposition would promote the solidification of support. Adams' strategy began with the use of Bristow's name to obtain support for the Liberals and then to launch the Adams' candidature when the Republicans refused to nominate a reformer. Bristow, the man who came nearest the Liberal "standard," refused to consider leaving the party fold, as Adams knew. Thus at the last moment, when Bristow balked, the candidature of Charles F. Adams would be the only alternative for true Liberals. If this postulate be valid, the defeat must have been deep and penetrating. The ignominy of being responsible for frustrating one's dearest aims must be galling in extreme.⁵⁴

The recognized futility of further political activity forced an alteration in the political position of Henry Adams.⁵⁵ The lesson was not wasted on infertile soil. If he learned anything, he learned that one who chose the political martyrdom of a principled stand, did so with solitary singularity, as Charles Francis Adams witnessed. Politicians refused to compromise their chances at re-election, not their principles. Adams' "self-respect" condemned his opportunism and manipulation of 1875-1876, but his heritage demanded that he enter public

⁵⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Carl Schurz, February 14, 1876 (Ford Letters (1858-1891), pp. 274-277).

⁵⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 24, 1875.

service. The failure of the reform attempt acted as a catalyst in the life of Henry Adams. Apparently he lacked potential as an effective force in politics. His journalistic endeavors -- always connected with his political ambitions -- ceased with the vitriolic October edition of the Review.⁵⁶ In fine, Adams failed as a politician and as a political strategist.

The new and intriguing life that lured Adams in 1870 abruptly disintegrated in 1876. The failure of the reform movement convinced him that politics held little reward for the truly principled "liberal," and his disillusionment with teaching increased as he saw his reforms gradually adopted.⁵⁷ A vacuum had been created that required a different and somewhat alien orientation in life. The principled and determined opposition of his forebears, in the face of much the same odds, exerted too strong an influence as a family tradition for Adams to withdraw simply and quietly from the struggle. Action in some form seemed incumbent, and Adams took what he thought the only course open to him. From the day of the great debacle, Adams henceforth found "amusement" by heaping vituperation upon corrupt politicians from afar. The scope of his effectiveness decreased because he no longer appealed to an indifferent and apathetic public. Adams, following the example of many reformers before him, reasoned with even more certainty that before reform reached the realms of possibility, some type of principled leadership must assume control. Although he continuously deprecated politics and politicians, stating his intention to shun things political

⁵⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

⁵⁷Ibid.

as the plague, one suspects that Adams conducted a personal crusade, depending upon the efficacy of individual conversion rather than mass appeal.

Adams' peculiar vocation in politics received further definition during the years immediately following the apostasy of the independents. The mediocrity of American society seemed obscene to Adams, and he found his vindication by providing social leadership in Washington.⁵⁸ He wrote endlessly about his disgust with politics, but remained unable to delineate social from political responsibilities. Consequently, Adams' comments on politics, caustic and endemic as they were, had, and still have a unique applicability as universal axioms. He asserted that peace was the ". . . only thing in politics worth preserving."⁵⁹ Politics produced the effect of vulgarizing and narrowing intelligent people. Adams pointed to numerous English examples, Bryce, ". . . Broderick, Lord Reay, Cely Trevillian [sic], George Howard . . ., all the worse for trying to mind other people's business."⁶⁰ He thought members of Parliament, and Congress, ostensibly as boring as ". . . an inmate of any other lunatic asylum. . . ."⁶¹ "Our legislative system here broke down long ago. It is absurd even to think of doing business with a crowd. . .," more so with an apathetic crowd. Nevertheless, such was politics, and Adams reacted with horror at the thought of

⁵⁸Adams was engaged in extensive research which necessitated his residence in Washington, but the major purpose was that indicated above.

⁵⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 21, 1878.

⁶⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, July 13, 1879.

⁶¹Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, June 27, 1879.

labeling it a science.⁶²

Adams magnified the possibilities inherent in the role he set for himself and his wife in Washington. In that primitive society, ". . . we are of less insignificance . . . We do not even talk scandal [At least, not often.] . . . We are not enmyés [sic] or blasés [sic] . . . [but] . . . are good natured."⁶³ With characteristic presumptuousness, Adams spoke of a dinner to be served at his home: ". . . as is not unusual, for we have to entertain all our eminent Boston constituents when they come on."⁶⁴ He dictatorially convinced himself that the activities of a social leader included a censorial responsibility and that he qualified adequately to undertake the role. But the duties lacked the all-inclusive quality they might have assumed. When Garfield fell under an assassin's hand, Adams worried whether he would retain access to the state department files. As a secondary consideration, he realized that the new president, Chester Arthur, was ". . . a low-downer; he is not much of a man."⁶⁵ On the other hand, the Adamses refused even social recognition to James G. Blaine, and agreed that the act demanded a considerable amount of courage. Of course, Blaine had received a severe defeat in the election of 1880. Adams convinced himself that Blaine ". . . is blown up forever."⁶⁶ The Adams fortunes had also suffered in the political contest of 1880, and Adams confessed

⁶²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 10, 1881.

⁶³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 28, 1878.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, July 9, 1881.

⁶⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, January 29, 1881.

that he had not a friend in the new administration, seemingly just cause for a despondent reaction.⁶⁷ Arthur executed a master stroke when he, without provocation, invited Adams to the White House. Although an adverse opinion resisted complete alteration, at least the vitriolic quality disappeared.⁶⁸

The public reaction to the assassination of James A. Garfield in July, 1881, was fitting to the nature of the act and the intention of the perpetrator. The assassin, a member of the Conkling-Arthur spoils-men, intended that "Chet Arthur" should enter the White House, and admitted patronage for his friends as his ultimate aim. The Congressional elections of 1882 revealed the depth of public revulsion, so intense that Democrats and Liberal Republicans assumed control in Congress. The Republican powers received a severe shock and subsequently cowered into a reforming pose. When the reformers triumphed in the elections of 1882, Adams announced his intention to return to the Republican Party, thereby lending it "respectability." The motivating logic behind this move aimed at preventing Blaine from returning to a dominant place in politics. Adams maintained that with Blaine, Conkling and Arthur thrown out, the Republican nominee could defeat an "indecent" Democrat. He assured himself that the Democrats would splinter into infinitesimal parts in attempting to nominate a candidate acceptable to all factions. The Republicans, with the assistance of Adams, would have an open field.⁶⁹

Adams acted completely in character when he generously offered

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 2, 1882.

⁶⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 12, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, November 26, 1882.

his "respectability" to the Republican Party in 1882. The disillusionment of 1876 slipped into the background when Adams perceived an opportunity to assume leadership in a new reform attempt. The elections of 1882 indicated a public readiness, but if Blaine, Conkling, Arthur, and company resumed control, the country faced another political abortion after the pattern of 1876. Again the country cried for leadership, and again Adams answered the call, despite his compatibility with the role he had previously assigned himself. The fatal attractiveness of political activity entangled his mind once more, and he exuded confidence in self and party, so much so that he failed to observe the strength of the opposition. He over-estimated the public alarm, and under-estimated the perseverance of the interests involved. As Van Wyck Brooks noted, Adams never realized his own deficiencies for practical politics. He plunged time after time into the troubled waters of national politics only to crawl upon the bank after the first encounter, gasping and condemning an overly indulgent public that refused to assume a course demanding some sacrifices. Adams simply failed to cope with the demands incumbent upon one desirous of reforming the country through political channels. Any sign of encouragement set him off again in pursuit of the fame so much a part of his heritage. He sincerely believed that under his guidance, reform approached reality. The country desperately needed reform, and in 1882, Adams exerted his utmost efforts to lead any who followed, joyously neglecting to look back and see if anyone cared enough to follow, or even understood what he proclaimed.

Adams felt encouragement in his optimism of 1883, especially when the reforming Congress enacted the "Boston bill," the Pendleton Civil Service Act of that year. The coverage of the act was not as

extensive as he desired, but it represented progress. Adams worried about the future, as machine politics ". . . will be irresistible if it is allowed to run much longer without a check."⁷⁰ Free elections hinged upon the unfettered choice of each voter. Adams predicted that Arthur would control the Southern "blackies" and that "New York will be fixed . . ." in 1884.⁷¹ Reviewing the last Congressional session, Adams commented that ". . . nothing was ever so rotten. . . The worst democratic [sic] administration would not be quite so revolting as this."⁷² His disgust was evoked by the attempts of the spoilsmen to resist the Pendleton legislation and to bar reform at all. However, by early 1884, Adams again felt confident that the year of reform had arrived.⁷³

Adams' position as the election of 1884 drew closer fitted one filled with expectant apprehension. He felt certain that "Revenue reform is bound to come, unless something wild turns up."⁷⁴ Tariffs would be lowered, and honest government would set the country right again. Adams believed that public opinion was "healthy" and political conditions were far better than they had been for a century.⁷⁵ After the conventions, Adams changed his mind, and reacted with disgust to the nomination of Blaine. His only choice led him to join the Mugwump

⁷⁰Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 28, 1883.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, March 4, 1883.

⁷³Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 7, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 23, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 3, 1884.

⁷⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 3, 1884.

⁷⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 18, 1884.

movement with Carl Schurz and vote for the Democrat, Grover Cleveland. Cleveland promised tariff revision and revenue reform. Blaine promised continuance of corruption and fraud. Adams observed little of actual choice in the matter for one so consistently dedicated to morality in public service.⁷⁶

If the election of 1884 taught anything, it taught disgust for independents ". . . too good to vote for Blaine and never -- no, never, -- would vote with the wicked democrats [sic]." ⁷⁷ Adams cited the example of the election of Jefferson in 1800 to demonstrate the senselessness of this political egocentricity. One voted for the man, not the party, as Adams had admonished for years. ⁷⁸ Adams became a Mugwump in 1884, and when Cleveland narrowly edged Blaine, he felt his actions were vindicated. He soon lost his illusions, however, when Cleveland used the patronage to forward preferred legislation and to further his control of the party. Adams reacted with an almost complete renunciation of politics as such, and saw the ". . . average Congressman . . . [as] . . . occupied in swearing at professional reformers and [forcibly] voting for their bills." ⁷⁹ That the insurgents had been somewhat successful in 1883 in the realm of reform legislation presaged to Adams a clean sweep in the coming presidential campaign. ⁸⁰ But when Blaine

⁷⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 18, 1884; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 27, 1884; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, July 3, 1884; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 3, 1884; Fuess, Schurz, pp. 292 (footnote)-299.

⁷⁷Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 3, 1884. ⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 7, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 21, 1881.

⁸⁰Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 7, 1883.

captured the Republican nomination in 1884, Adams withdrew the "respectability" he had graciously loaned to the party. He placed himself among the ranks of the bolters, but went beyond most of them. He conspired with Abram S. Hewitt, a Democrat, and other "independents" to obtain tariff reform.⁸¹ By September, Adams became utterly nauseated, as the campaign avoided the issues and concentrated on the illegitimate child of Cleveland and the knavery of Blaine. He felt that the whole political structure of America was being rearranged, and he could but laugh sardonically at his and the country's expense.⁸²

The new president was ". . . honest, hardworking . . .," courageous and well equipped with common sense, but, for all that, lacked experience and accepted the backing of a ". . . ragged, timid and stupid" party.⁸³ Adams wrote John Hay expressing the hope that his ". . . new house may be more solid than the democratic [*sic*] party seems to be. . .," since they both ". . . got under shelter at the same time."⁸⁴ In the same letter, Adams complained that ". . . five thousand Grover Cleverlands. . ." arrived to replace the former Ohio forces. "New York has come here to swallow us, with the most fatuous expression I have ever imagined on its face."⁸⁵ Still Adams hoped for some measure of good government, although he anticipated nothing of any permanence. Cleveland appeared capable of standing alone and giving character to the

⁸¹Letter, Henry Adams to Abram S. Hewitt, July 14, 1884 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 131).

⁸²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 21, 1884.

⁸³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 8, 1885.

⁸⁴Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, March 7, 1885.

⁸⁵Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, March 7, 1885.

administration, hence ". . . I think we are sure of four years of better government than we have had for a long time. . . . President Cleveland is . . . perfectly common . . . neither refined nor . . . vulgar . . . merely a strong, somewhat coarse machine . . . callous to attack from his own party."⁸⁶

But Adams soon despaired of the new Democratic administration. Although Cleveland adhered to the theoretical views of the Liberal-Mugwumps concerning civil service reform, he needed the patronage power to retain his position in the party. For this reason, and because of his conception of the executive's duties and powers, Cleveland refused to comply with the Senate's request for "papers" relative to each removal. Further, Cleveland refused to assume a pose of legislative leadership. He recommended, thus fulfilling his obligations, as he believed. Adams' expectations again experienced shattering unfulfillment. No tariff reform materialized, no currency reform, merely a limited extension of civil service coverage. It might well be that Adams expected too much. It is certain that his disappointment was sharp.⁸⁷ In August of 1885, Adams professed a weariness for things political, and had discovered that, "There are few political prizes that would reward me for the labor of helping to put them [his friends] in [power], or for being responsible for them after they got in."⁸⁸ He concluded

⁸⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, March 22, 1885.

⁸⁷Fuess, Schurz, pp. 200-216; Vincent P. DeSantis, "Grover Cleveland," found in Morton Borden, editor, America's Ten Greatest Presidents (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1961), pp. 161-184; letter, Henry Adams to E. L. Godkin, February 23, 1885 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 138-140); letter, Henry Adams to E. L. Godkin, February 27, 1885 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 140-141).

⁸⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 30, 1885.

that "Congress . . . knows no history. Let us govern ourselves ignorantly, for wisdom liveth not among the learned."⁸⁹ Adams found that the most significant aspect of the Cleveland administration inhered in Mrs. Cleveland's ". . . splendid vigor in handshaking. . . ."⁹⁰

The new administration that assumed office in March, 1889, provided amusement for Henry Adams. Harrison's antics proved quite enjoyable, and Adams could savor them the more for having learned of them through Hay and Blaine. One finds the former hatred for Blaine absent, at least inactive. Adams had favored Cleveland over Harrison -- "He is not Moses, but he is better than the other fellow." -- traditionally hated Blaine, but nonetheless easily reconciled himself to both.⁹¹ He reflected on the quirks of an inscrutable fate. Don and Mrs. Cameron, the Pennsylvania Senatorial family, ". . . wandered hand in hand on the sands of Coney Island waiting for the Maine sea-cook and his son . . . until life grew dim and the Presidency distant."⁹² Henry Adams had discovered that the "sands" grew too warm for comfortable strolling, and found "sea-cooks" notorious for their untrustworthiness. But, life went on, and it made little difference who the leaders chanced to be; one's best hopes fixed upon slow but immutable progress.⁹³

The morbid lethargy that characterized Adams' life during the

⁸⁹Letter, Henry Adams to John W. Field, September 20, 1885.

⁹⁰Diary, March 20, 1888 (This diary can be found in the micro-film).

⁹¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, July 15, 1888; diary, March 31, 1889.

⁹²Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 19, 1888.

⁹³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 3, 1884.

late eighties descended upon him when his wife committed suicide in 1885. His disillusionment with life increased because of a self-centeredness that he had indulged throughout all of his adult years. Consequently, the period from December, 1885, until some time in 1891, witnessed a frenzied search for sympathetic understanding, and marked extreme self-pity. He wrote in his diary of the fits of despondency which overcame him with little provocation.⁹⁴ A tragic element entered when he lost almost all ability to feel, even superficially.⁹⁵ The Platonic relationship with Mrs. Cameron provided diversion, but contributed little to the political education of Henry Adams. However, the escape into that traumatic and dream-like world transpired without notice, as it lacked the durability of reality. Adams' gradual reawakening occurred during his trips to Japan, Cuba and the South Seas with La Farge and others. He came to appreciate more intensely the world of color which he had previously intellectualized into an artificial frigidity. A new world opened to him, lending better focus on the old. By 1891, Adams resumed his role as the critical observer again, but with a somewhat altered emphasis.

That Adams was not unaware of the course of events is evident from comments made from time to time. For instance, he appreciated the significance of the trend in judicial interpretation. In the Granger Cases of the seventies, Justice Field dissented mightily against the theory of inherent powers of the state, the so-called "police power." Field's vigorous dissents became majority opinions during the late

⁹⁴Diary, January, 1888, to July, 1889.

⁹⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Elizabeth Cameron, June 27, 1889.

eighties, and Adams remarked that ". . . the hardened old law-calf has the pleasure of dancing on his enemy's grave."⁹⁶ He advised Gaskell against investing in American rails, as ". . . they are too much exposed to hostile legislation, taxation and competition. . ." to encourage investment.⁹⁷ These developments preyed on Adams' mind, and were instrumental in stimulating the development of an altered outlook. He changed his position, but by subtle shifts almost too minute for notice. It is possible that he himself was unaware of any shifts.

In 1891, Adams deprecated the efforts of Henry Cabot Lodge and Thurlow Reed who attempted to increase the efficiency of Congress. Adams thought Lodge should have known that an efficient Congress mattered little to most people. The elections demonstrated that ". . . the more efficient you make Congress, the more dangerous you make it, and the more unpopular. The people do not want heroic treatment . . . This has been the law of American politics from the beginning -- No heroes except soldiers!"⁹⁸ Even though Adams himself believed an efficient Congress a prerequisite for an orderly society, he preferred to withdraw and await the day when the people would realize the actual conditions. Adams had learned that in a democracy, change was at best slow and never certain. He no longer labored under the impression that the presence of a principled leadership fulfilled the only requirement for reform. Until the people became aware of what he saw lucidly, no progress could

⁹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 18, 1889.

⁹⁷Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 18, 1889; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, April 21, 1889; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 285-292.

⁹⁸Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 4, 1891 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 234-235).

evolve. The lessons of twenty years taught skepticism about individual conversion as an educative device, and that reform attempts approached reality as public indifference declined. Perhaps the answer lay in a campaign to awaken an entire people to the perils of sustained self-delusion. Adams was not sure.⁹⁹

Twenty years of experience in and out of politics, induced maturation of the political philosophy adhered to by Henry Adams, the logical joining point for the theoretical postulates of Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. Adams began by accepting without question the heritage of eighteenth century liberalism handed to him by his father as he had received it from his. However, questions raised by the course of events in late nineteenth century America effected a modification of traditional concepts of government and political leadership. Eighteenth century liberalism had been geared to an agrarian economy of simple proportions, vastly out of contiguity with conditions during Adams' time. Changes in the economic structures presaged corresponding changes in the existing political and social institutions. Adams only slowly realized that his credo suffered obsolescence because of contemporary alterations in conditions. If men hoped to realize their full potential, adjustment to modern exigencies seemed unavoidable. Gradually the realization dawned upon Adams that the old beliefs no longer rang true for men facing new challenges. He first posed the question in his "Gold Conspiracy" article of 1870, in which he concluded that any course

⁹⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 24, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 12, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 29, 1885; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 25, 1886; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 1, 1887; letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Cameron, September 16, 1888.

chosen placed in jeopardy the liberties of all the citizenry, unless the people exercised their prerogative and intelligently controlled the government.¹⁰⁰ In the interim, the problem remained unresolved, and the ordinary citizen's best answer lay in formulating a reasoned philosophy of life and adhering to it despite the urge to do otherwise.

Adams still believed that Americans possessed the qualities necessary for the production of a better society than the world had yet witnessed. How to put these qualities into use concerned Adams throughout most of his adult life. He knew that the country begged for reform, but twenty years of wasted effort convinced him that political endeavor deceived the reformer into an enthusiastic expectancy that remained unrequited.¹⁰¹ By 1891, Adams' belief in the efficacy of social reform emanating from the mass of the people, that first appeared in 1870, rigidified into rock-like conviction. Previous inconsistencies reappeared occasionally, but Adams never again resorted to politics to solve the problems impending before American society.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰Adams, "Gold Conspiracy," pp. 101-136.

¹⁰¹Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, December 16, 1888.

¹⁰²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 24, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 12, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 29, 1885; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 25, 1886; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 1, 1887; letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Cameron, September 16, 1888.

CHAPTER II

"HISTORY IS A TANGLED SKEIN"

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The Harvard to which Adams withdrew in 1870 was in the process of change. In fact, change constituted the major appeal of Harvard for Henry Adams.¹ He remembered all too vividly his earlier years at that venerable institution, and knew the stultifying effects of a "literal-minded" and all too often uninspired method of instruction emphasizing the classics by way of lecture and recitation. The lecture system, outmoded with the passing of the middle ages, in Adams' opinion, appeared to him as mere drudgery. This same impression impinged upon the leaders in higher education, E. W. Gurney, Charles W. Eliot, Andrew D. White, Herbert B. Adams, and Daniel Coit Gilman, among others.² The German method, emphasizing directed reading and individual research gained favor among college men who received their advanced training in the German universities. The current scientific breakthroughs stimulated a reform of method within universities which vastly modified older ideas about the content and contexture of college instruction. The emphasis on science that resulted from the desire to apply, extend, or refute Darwin caused a specialization wherein minutiae assumed the importance

¹Adams, Education, p. 304; letter, Henry Adams to Jacob D. Cox, November 17, 1870; letter, Henry Adams to Charles Eliot Norton, January 13, 1871.

²Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decade: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-95 (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1932), pp. 37-43 (Hereafter: Mumford, Brown Decades).

of the grand themes and speculations of old. Not that the idea was novel or radically different from what scientists and some historians had advocated for centuries. The notable fact about the change inhered in the very pervasiveness which attended it. Adams innovated, but he certainly did not invent, and of this he was well aware.³

Adams' teaching career at Harvard remained satisfying and challenging until the novelty degenerated into routine. Medieval art and architecture had fascinated Adams as early as the continental tour of 1858. The position at Harvard offered the opportunity to explore the history of that period of time in minute detail. Adams admitted that he knew little about the subject, but then who did? He found the amount of work that had been done was scant, making the field a unique avenue to a certain kind of success for the man willing to investigate. But problems presented themselves immediately in that Adams faced the task of educating himself and his students concurrently. He fairly lunged at the challenge, and devoted himself to his duties with an enthusiasm and determination that brooked no interference. Impatient when sources were unavailable, he yearned to drop everything and scavenge Europe for the materials he so desperately required.⁴

Despite the paucity of definitive works, Adams found that the

³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 29, 1870; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 25, 1870; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 10, 1870; Hofstadter, Higher Education, pp. 17, 30-37, 65-67; Earnest, Processions, p. 168; Adams, Education, pp. 299-307; Stow Persons, American Minds, A History of Ideas (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1958), pp. 194-197 (Hereafter: Persons, American Minds); Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 170-182, 227-241; Hofstadter, Social Darwinism, Chapter I, passim; Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 257-261.

⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 18, 1871; letter, Henry Adams to Charles Eliot Norton, January 13, 1871.

available materials numbered sufficiently to demand constant attention if he meant to avoid embarrassment, ". . . as my young men are disgustingly clever at upsetting me with questions."⁵ He wrote of being overworked, but expressed satisfaction with having devoured four volumes in an evening, while neglecting three or four more. He liked the thought of lecturing on ". . . a period of history which I have not even heard of until today."⁶ He wondered how long the excitement would continue, but in the spring of 1871, he prided himself on his record as a professor. He affirmed that ". . . education . . . [was] . . . a good thing for its own sake," and advised Gaskell to postpone any intended visit to the United States for a few years in order to allow the country sufficient time for growth, as America "improved by age."⁷

The summer of 1871 saw Adams lost in the planning of a graduate course in medieval history.⁸ Plans included the production of a group of written lectures, a project he found himself subsequently forced to forego because of the dearth of time. The urge to go to Germany and study the original documents sharpened almost overwhelmingly, but his duties demanded extreme attention, to the exclusion of everything else.⁹ He was certain that his particular method of instruction vindicated itself in the quality of the finished product. In January, 1872, he

⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 10, 1870.

⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 27, 1871.

⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 18, 1871;
letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 20, 1871.

⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 22, 1871.

⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 23, 1871.

proudly wrote that the ". . . boys are now trained to go by themselves."¹⁰ He refused the opportunity to return to journalism in the spring of 1872, on grounds that he planned to embark on a year's vacation in Europe, and that he was ". . . tied here [Harvard] by the leg."¹¹ The trip to Europe, projected as a honeymoon, but more rightly described, consisted of an experience in historiography. Adams allowed few European historians to escape his questions, read voraciously, and even encouraged his newly acquired spouse to join him in historical scholarship.

The Adamses, married in June of 1872, immediately embarked for England. Marion Adams made constant reference to her husband's activities in letters posted almost daily to her father. In August, Adams immersed himself deeply in German history, reading it in the original language. He started his wife into Schiller's Thirty Years War, and the two planned ". . . really to study . . ." when they began their journey up the Nile. Through his wife's connection with George Bancroft, then serving as American minister to Germany, Adams met and discussed history with all of the Berlin historians. He found that the Germans had not breached the gap of the medieval period. He finally located publishers who knew the books he wanted.¹² In Bonn, he had been discouraged to

¹⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles F. Adams, January 7, 1872; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, January 22, 1872.

¹¹Letter, Henry Adams to Whitelaw Ried, May 15, 1872.

¹²Letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, August 7, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, p. 24); letter Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, September 15, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 39-40); letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, September 9, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, p. 37); letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, August 23, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, p. 26); letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, September 22, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, p. 42); letter, Henry Adams to Charles F. Adams, October 13, 1872. Adams met and talked with Heinrich R. H. F. von Gneist, Theodor Mommsen, Ernest Curtius, George H. Pertz, Herman Grimm, and Heinrich von Sybel.

find that no one had heard of ". . . any book . . . asked for." He wrote of having finally acquired in Berlin ". . . a small library of books . . . [which he carried about with him as a] . . . menagerie."¹³

In 1873, after a tour of the continent and an extended voyage up the Nile River, Adams returned to England and expressed his pleasure at being ". . . received . . . uncommon well . . ." at Oxford.¹⁴ While there he met William Stubbs, Benjamin Jewett, Charles Henry Robarts, Charles Clifford, Sir Henry Maine, Montague Burrows and Robert Laing, all scholars of note and devotees of the "germ" theory of history emphasizing the historical evolution of institutions.¹⁵ He ". . . inspected the early English M.S.S. [sic] in the Bodleian, and . . . [meant]. . . to attack Stubbs tomorrow."¹⁶ Essentially unimpressed by the English system of higher education, he averred that "The spirit is better in ours." English historians were ". . . too much into money and social distinctions."¹⁷ From all of this it appears certain that Harvard and the professing of history retained their charm for Adams even in the contingency of such challenges. He still felt "of use" in this position, and began projecting further plans for rendering Harvard into an institution where work of good quality could be accomplished.¹⁸

¹³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 5, 1872; letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, August 23, 1872 (Thoron, Letters, p. 25).

¹⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 31, 1873.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 29, 1873.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, March 29, 1873 (Thoron, Letters, p. 91).

Adams returned to Harvard and took up his duties as instructor in the fall of 1873. He lectured twelve hours per week, and admitted being hardpressed to stay ahead of his students. He adopted the practice of using his former students to ease the load, but observed himself unable to finish all of his work as rapidly as he wished.¹⁹ He wrote constant avowals of being overworked, but there rang a note of satisfaction with work accomplished in each one of them. As late as 1874, Adams registered a determination to remain with the ". . . Professorship for some years to come, if not for life."²⁰ His satisfaction with his work indicated that his method differed vastly from that existent when he came to Harvard in 1870.

Adams had always been convinced of the teleological element in history, as had been his ancestors before him. Consequently, his idea of the duty of an historian involved the effort to ". . . track a given idea through the labyrinths of law and literature."²¹ He insisted that the student first be versed in languages, at least German and Latin, with French, Anglo-Saxon, Italian, and any other the student could master. The scholar should then fix his mind upon a definite object and read widely, always looking for relevant material. It mattered little how much the student accomplished, so long as what was done was done well. As a second task one learned method, since knowledge without method led to chaos or confusion. Adams praised the German historians

¹⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 26, 1873.

²⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 31, 1874.

²¹Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 11, 1873 (Ford, Letters (1858-91), pp. 252-254).

for having the ". . . great merit of a very high standard of knowledge." It appeared that the essential difference between the German and the English historian resided in their contrasting methods, as many Englishmen demonstrated a vast array of knowledge but still produced superficial or ignorant works, impossible for a German in Adams' opinion.²²

In 1875, Adams wrote to Sir Henry Maine relating the progress of his seminar in Anglo-Saxon law. Already the class had gone through Maine's Ancient Law and Village Communities, J. F. McLennan's studies on primitive marriage, Erwin Nasse's Uber die Mittelalterliche Feldgemeinschaft, Andrew Huesler's Die Gewere, the Germania, the Lex Salica, besides all other studies available to them. Adams maintained that he was attempting to teach a method of investigation and to provide mental stimulation to his students. He delighted in their arguments that consumed hours in the class room, and boasted that his students measured up to examples drawn from any other country in the world. His means of drawing them out was succinctly set forth in a note to Henry Cabot Lodge, one of his students.²³

I didn't mean to say that you couldn't think closely. If I thought that, I shouldn't blackguard you so steadily for not doing it.²⁴

²²Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, January 2, 1873 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 235-236).

²³Letter, Henry Adams to Sir Henry Maine, February 22, 1875 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 64); letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, July 31, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 294); letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 30, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 292); Thwing, "Henry Adams," pp. 224-236.

²⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 30, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 292).

Not only must one read the sources, but he must demonstrate intimate familiarity and understanding through informed discussion and argumentation. Adams insisted that his students read, ponder and digest rather than merely attain familiarity by contact.

Adams' enthusiasm was invigorating in 1874. Another class had been placed under his guidance, and he anticipated the opportunity to ". . . expose British tyranny. . ." in American colonial history.²⁵ He devoted the entire summer to prodigious reading and writing for the course. He posed intriguing questions and wrote to friends and historians to find their reactions. He began to see the New England settlement as but ". . . a continuation, in sharper form, of Virginia . . . King James suppressed . . . Virginia . . . because it was too liberal, and with it . . . the hopes of those who wished to turn the colony to a political purpose."²⁶ Adams rapidly concluded that Sam Adams "was right," and doubted whether ". . . we should have had any John, or any union at all . . ." without Sam Adams.²⁷ The validity of Adams' contentions did not reflect upon the curiosity and enthusiasm that inspired them. Rather, the contentions demonstrated that Adams was a searching and satisfied professor until he felt no longer challenged.²⁸

²⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 22, 1874.

²⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Samuel F. Haven (Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society), November 23, 1874 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 61).

²⁷Letter, Henry Adams to John G. Palfrey, July 1, 1874 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 58).

²⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 22, 1874; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, July 6, 1874; letter, Henry Adams to John G. Palfrey, July 1, 1874 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 58); letter, Henry Adams to John Palfrey, July 5, 1874 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 60); letter, Henry Adams to Samuel F. Haven (Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society), November 23, 1874 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 61).

By the summer of 1875, Henry Adams had become a skilled and accomplished historian. He no longer found it necessary to read volumes as if they were letters, or to spend his wakeful hours in planning exercises for his students. His students had been early trained to go by themselves, largely because his method placed a premium on independent and original work. The teacher had mastered his technique and his material, and could now relax and allow his students to work. Time had always been a curse to Henry Adams. The unoccupied mind turned inward and fed on itself, an unhealthy condition.²⁹ As Adams pondered the educational system at Harvard, he became convinced that all of his efforts had been to little avail. In August, 1875, he wrote to Cunliffe that Harvard produced nothing but intellectual "priggs."³⁰ Adams realized more keenly than ever the need for reform, but it was ". . . sometimes hard to see how to . . ." go about it. He concluded that the teacher merely ". . . reproduces himself in his scholar . . . Nothing comes of it all."³¹

Adams was simply bored. He had embarked upon a course of reform, and had accomplished his object so well that he himself expressed pleasure at the result. Instead of glowing, however, he harrangued Gaskell about the ". . . idiocies of a university education."³² His projected study of Anglo-Saxon law, first conceived in 1873 while he toured Europe, moved forward at a reasonable rate, and he anticipated little to complain

²⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 9, 1876.

³⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, August 31, 1875.

³¹Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 14, 1876.

³²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

of there.³³ In the summer of 1875, he asked President Eliot to create a rival course to cover the same material utilized in his course in American history so that Lodge could present another interpretation of the same events. Eliot refused, as the schedule for the coming term had already been decided. Adams despaired, and refused to promise to teach such a course in the event of its appearance on the curriculum for the 1876-1877 term. It appears obvious that Adams had decided to leave Harvard. The best explanation seems to be that he desired to widen the scope of his reforms.³⁴

Henry Adams, reformer by birth and predilection, surrendered to the power of an active intellect demanding variety and challenge. When he saw his reforms a fact at Harvard, and subsequently at other universities such as the new Johns Hopkins, at Cornell, wherever one cared to look, he felt the need for some new activity.³⁵ In March of 1877 he reiterated his request for a rival course to his, offering to stand all of the expense himself.³⁶ Eliot's reaction remains unverified, but Adams wanted desperately some new cause. He lost his political ambitions in the election of 1876, and subsequently resigned the editorship of the North American Review. His experiences as a reforming editor had not been blessed with the success that attended his professing

³³Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 11, 1873 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 252-254).

³⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Henry Cabot Lodge, June 10, 1875 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 268-269); letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, August 31, 1875; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 14, 1876; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

³⁵Mumford, Brown Decades, pp. 39-41.

³⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles W. Eliot, March 2, 1877 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 80-81).

career.

Adams edited eighteen issues of the North American Review that were published in the years between 1870-1877. His first issue, January, 1871, was painful, and as usual, he felt quite uncertain of its success. He had been given almost a free hand, and believed that if he failed so would the Review, a characteristic Adams outlook.³⁷ He was already feeling the strain of having to cater to those willing to purchase advertising space in the Review. "Articles enough, . . . I can get, but a page of advertisement would offer me more attractions than the cleverest page of criticism I ever saw."³⁸ However, in the same letter, Adams asked for reviews of Italian books. From his friend, Charles M. Gaskell, he solicited reviews of British books, as ". . . no one here is up to such work."³⁹

By November, 1871, Adams' confidence in his success with the Review increased. He noted with pleasure that the English periodical The Saturday Review had commented about the new vigor and quality of the Review under his direction. In December, he boasted of having shrewdly "caught out" Edward A. Freeman in a review of the latter's Historical Essays.⁴⁰ Undoubtedly Adams injected new life into the Review, but it

³⁷Richard Felix Miller, "Henry Adams as Reformer With a Bibliography" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1947), pp. 21-23 (Hereafter: Miller, "Henry Adams"); letter, Henry Adams to Charles E. Norton, January 13, 1871 (Cater, Henry Adams, p.53).

³⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles E. Norton, January 13, 1871 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 54).

³⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1871.

⁴⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 13, 1871; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 21, 1871.

is also apparent that Adams' major concern was political reform. Of the ninety-five articles appearing in the Review while under Adams' guidance, fully one-quarter were concerned with political reform, the remainder taking the form of literary and historical essays.⁴¹

After the July, 1872, edition of the Review was published, Adams resigned, owing to his honeymoon in Europe, and absented himself from his position until late 1873. He wrote Gaskell in December of that year saying that he had resumed the duties of an editor again.⁴² Gaskell contributed to the Review, as did most of Adams' friends. Adams begged articles unceasingly, but insisted that they be "particularly sharp . . . [to] . . . attract attention in a Quarterly."⁴³ When he had assumed control again in late 1873, Henry Cabot Lodge acted as his assistant, thus relieving him of some of the drudgery of proof reading and revising. During this time Adams developed his theory of stylistic writing while instructing Lodge from time to time in the canons of good literature. The two continually found themselves forced to revise articles submitted for publication.⁴⁴

The real importance of the Review to Adams was political as most critics agree. However, Adams wrote for the elite, hence the people he denounced rarely read his strictures. Godkin, in 1876, commented on

⁴¹Miller, "Henry Adams," p. 25.

⁴²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 8, 1873.

⁴³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 2, 1871; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 26, 1874.

⁴⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 22, 1874; letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June (?), 1874 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 259-260); letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 25, 1874 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 261-262).

the fruitlessness of Adams' issue after the Liberal reform debacle. This edition (October, 1876), dedicated to pointing the decadence and corruption in American society, remains Adams' finest piece of journalistic endeavor. His principal conclusion attempted to persuade the voter that he should be independent, voting for the man, not the party. Voters should be aware of the records of the men for whom they decided to cast their precious ballots, and should require an extreme moral code of their representatives. Ironically, Adams' postulates rightly claimed validity, but the only people to read were those who had been previously convinced.⁴⁵

With the failure of political reform in 1876, and the simultaneous urge to abandon teaching, Adams' career assumed totally new proportions. As has been previously noted, he viewed journalism as a means to an end, hence his interest disintegrated in 1876. Besides, he had enough of the drudgery of editing, and wanted to write again. Adams always looked upon himself as a littérateur rather than as an historian or a journalist. Despite his earlier professions of respect for the life of a free lance, he wanted more than mere reporting. When he left Harvard, he had already completed two attempts at historical writing, the Pocahontas exposé and his recent study of Anglo-Saxon law. He prided himself on the Anglo-Saxon essays, declaring that "This has been a really satisfying piece of work."⁴⁶ He challenged historians of any

⁴⁵Miller, "Henry Adams," pp. 12-13; letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, August 25, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 296-297); letter, Henry Adams to Lewis Henry Morgan, October 16, 1876 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 80); Adams, "Canvass," passim.

⁴⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

country to do better.⁴⁷

The Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law, the first serious work on a large scale that Adams attempted, was a successful piece of historical literature. The book included an essay by Adams himself, and the doctoral dissertations of his Ph.D. candidates of 1876.⁴⁸ Oscar Cargill has said that Adams received a great deal of outside assistance in planning and conducting this intensive study, but no evidence has been found to corroborate that imputation. Adams wrote in 1876 that he was busy proof reading and correcting his own and the students' essays. No reference exists to any other authority than Adams and the students, barring the sources utilized in research.⁴⁹

Adams intended, in the Anglo-Saxon project, to trace the development of English law from the original Germanic sources, emulating the scholarship of those historians dedicated to the "germ theory."⁵⁰ He began with the family, and followed the development of legal forms by tracking ". . . a given idea through the labyrinths of law and literature."⁵¹ Aiming not merely to relate facts, he meant to develop the sequence of events to ". . . find out what men are and have been driving

⁴⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Lewis Henry Morgan, July 14, 1877 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 83-84).

⁴⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 30, 1876; Henry Adams, editor, Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1905), passim (Hereafter: Adams, Essays); Levenson, Henry Adams, p. 52.

⁴⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 30, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 292); Cargill, Intellectual America, p. 554; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1876.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, June 11, 1873 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 252-254); Adams, Essays, passim, especially Adams' introductory essay. See also, Hochfield, Secession Winter, pp. 333-360, for Adams' work on the rights of women.

at. . . ."⁵² He selected a theme as grand as any projected by Gibbon, Macaulay, Bancroft, Parkman or most other renowned scholars. The exercise in the Essays offered training for Adams, allowing him to develop the method he deemed so necessary to the writing of history.

Adams had in mind a more immediate goal, to which the work involved in the production of the Essays was preparatory. When he left Harvard, he journeyed to Washington and assumed a role as the social critic of the nation. Where else would the reformer who desired to re-orientate and revitalize American society reside besides the national capital? He wrote Gaskell that literature promised more rewards than politics, and that he enjoyed his wide acceptance in his "cloak of historian."⁵³ Social criticism called for the application of his former dictum governing college teaching. He would practice the old college rule on a grand scale, applying it to the nation. If he did not believe the country had potential, he would not "blackguard" it so steadily for failing to realize that potential.⁵⁴

But before the plan could be put into effect, Adams had yet to acquire the breadth of knowledge incumbent upon one assuming a task of that magnitude. His first attempt at acquiring knowledge appeared in the Documents Relating to New England Federalism. He had begun the collection of these documents while still at Harvard, and it appeared

⁵²Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, January 3, 1873 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 237).

⁵³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 14, 1877.

⁵⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, July 31, 1876 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 294); letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 25, 1877 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 302).

in print before Adams launched his second effort at accumulating the necessary knowledge. In early 1877, Albert R. Gallatin entrusted to Adams' care all of the elder Gallatin's papers, the former Secretary of the Treasury, diplomat, and Congressman of the Jeffersonian era. Adams immediately began to catalog and sift out the material related to a biography of the man and the nation. With the book published in 1879, he admitted that the literary quality of the work suffered from the difficulty of deciding which document to omit. He chose to let Gallatin's writings present the narrative, while he merely sketched in the background.⁵⁵ Consequently, the finished product came closer to Adams' idea of "scientific" history than any other of his works. Adams felt that the historian must allow his men to "work for themselves." Rarely if ever has this been better achieved than in the Life of Albert Gallatin, and the accompanying three volumes of his writings.⁵⁶

In the Gallatin, Adams presented the documents and allowed them to relate the unfolding of the American drama. The basic theme centered upon the rise to power of the Jeffersonian liberals and their subsequent activities while in control of the government. By skillfully arranging the documents, Adams demonstrated that the Jeffersonians surrendered

⁵⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, August 31, 1879.

⁵⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, February 1, 1878 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 305); Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 11-23; Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 72-77; Raymond Walters, Jr., Albert Gallatin, Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat (New York: Macmillan, 1957), pp. vii (Hereafter: Walters, Gallatin); Henry Adams, The Life of Albert Gallatin (Reprint Edition; New York: Peter Smith, 1943), passim (Hereafter: Adams, Gallatin); Henry Adams, The Writings of Albert Gallatin (Three Volumes; Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1879), passim; Henry Adams, editor, Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1905), passim.

their principles in the face of impending circumstances: European intrigue, the acquisition and settlement of national domain, European abuse of American rights, attempted American counter-action, obstructionism within the United States, war with its accompanying increases of Federal power, and finally, peace and a note of optimism for the future. In a word, Republican idealism had failed from the start. It failed first of all because it lacked the vitality and vigor to withstand the circumstances that it faced, and most of all, because the Jeffersonians had not even applied it in the fullest sense. Liberalism had not really had its chance, as Jefferson and his cohorts shed their principles immediately upon acquiring power.⁵⁷

Adams infused a note of optimism into the Gallatin, however, when he noted that Gallatin retained his basic faith through all of the trials of the Republican debacle. His greatness came in the form of refusing power ". . . when he found out what vanity it was, and yet became neither a cynic nor a transcendental philosopher."⁵⁸ Further Adams noted that liberalism might still prevail if men realized and capitalized upon their previous errors. The nation had reverted to its original condition of isolation, concerned only with its own development following the peace at Ghent. No longer hindered by foreign interference, the country met a unique opportunity to set the course of growth aright once more. Jeffersonians had intuited correctly, but had failed

⁵⁷Adams, Gallatin, passim; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 11-23; Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 72-77. For comparison, generally favorable, see Walters, Gallatin, passim; Walters is more comprehensive and stylistically superior.

⁵⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Henry C. Lodge, October 6, 1879 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), pp. 314-315).

to follow their inclinations. Jacob Levenson believes that Adams found the Jeffersonians so successful that the negative aspects of government could be transformed into the positive as early as 1806 and 1808.⁵⁹ In doing so, Levenson accepts Adams' eulogisms of Gallatin's financial and internal improvement plans at face value, much as Adams took Gallatin at his written word. Gallatin recommended positive action in 1806 and 1808, but only by altering his theories concerning a national debt and direct taxation, as Adams later pointed out. If one reads the Gallatin with an eye toward Adams' basic theme, obviously the Jeffersonians attained success in government simply by neglecting their theoretical postulates and adhering to a Federalist credo. Adams wrote under the conviction that the Jeffersonian Revolution consisted merely of a change of men in office, not a modification of system.⁶⁰

After finishing the Gallatin study, and arranging for publication, Adams and his wife sailed for Europe for a combined vacation and professional search. In the spring of 1879, Adams wrote to American ministers and to friends begging that they exert influence to aid him in obtaining access to the diplomatic papers pertaining to the period between 1800-1817. He had previously gone through the Jefferson papers, and had sifted the Gallatin writings to curry out all of the data pertinent to his projected study of the United States during the administrations of Jefferson and Madison. He had obtained entrance into the State Department files, but knew that he needed information available only in the foreign countries concerned--for the most part, France, Spain and England.

⁵⁹Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 72-77.

⁶⁰Adams, Gallatin, passim, and especially pp. 272-273, 349-350, 379, 460-461, 560, 561, 639.

Through the requested influence of friends and national agents, Adams was able to obtain the coveted materials. He went through the archives in London, Paris, Madrid, Seville, Granada, and Burgos. By November, 1880, Adams was back at 1607 H Street, and at work again on his opus, which he had actually been preparing since 1876.⁶¹

Adams dedicated himself to his work on the History. He wrote five hours each day, and devoted the remainder to social functions. It was during this period that the "Five of Hearts" came into existence. Adams, his wife, the John Hays, and Clarence King came together to form this mutual admiration society. Cargill has referred to the "Five" as the "baffled critics of the Gilded Age," a characterization not entirely justifiable.⁶² The little group met for tea and conversation regularly, and it can be inferred that the conversation was of an elevated quality, although the topics ranged from political gossip and social tid-bits of interest to the caustic discussions about society which probably gave shape to at least three novels.⁶³ If Adams led the discussion, he quite possibly applied his Harvard techniques and drew out his companions with his barbed strictures condemning society and the degenerating tendencies

⁶¹See the letters written by Adams between July, 1879, and September, 1880, specifically, one written to Robert Cunliffe, October 8, 1879. For Adams' reaction to a slight on the Gallatin, see a letter to E. L. Godkin, November 22, 1880 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 101-103); letter, Henry Adams to James R. Lowell, February 10, 1880 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 99-100); letter, Henry Adams to George Bancroft, June 8, 1878 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 87); letter, Henry Adams to James R. Lowell, September 13, 1879 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 90-91). Adams was teaching himself the Spanish language during the days just previous to his journey to Spain; he translated the documents himself, at times too literally; letter, Henry Adams to Francis Parkman, October 4, 1881 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 116-117).

⁶²Cargill, Intellectual America, p. 555.

⁶³Adams' Democracy and Esther, and John Hay's The Breadwinners.

so apparent to him. Cater stated that Adams read portions of his first novel to that select group, profiting by their reactions. In Cater's opinion, Mrs. Adams brought and kept the group together, vitalizing the atmosphere, ". . . animated and well dressed, serving and receiving the latest political gossip, with a brilliant, if somewhat careless, wit."⁶⁴

The "Five of Hearts" served as a sounding board for Adams' first plunge into the waters of purely literary endeavor. All of his previous work fell under classifications as muckraking journalism, "scientific" history, or the fooleries of a young man's mind. The result of his first attempt provided both education and amusement for Henry Adams. In 1880, he published anonymously a satirical novel which he chose to entitle Democracy. Its relationship to governmental figures painfully apparent, the book raised a storm of protest from its first appearance. As time passed, the outraged screams elicited by the book became even shriller. Adams, well pleased, exchanged thrusts with Hay concerning the authorship of those "revolting libels."⁶⁵ He nearly suffered comic hysteria when his brother Charles Francis, Junior, wrote a review of John Hay's Breadwinners -- a novel in a similar vein to Democracy, but centered around Cleveland, Ohio -- affirming that the two books belonged to the same author because of the ". . . coarse, half-educated . . .

⁶⁴Cater, Henry Adams, p. xliv (Cater obtained his information from Mrs. Ward Thoron, "a Henry Adams neice.").

⁶⁵Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, September 3, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, October 8, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, November 26, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 6, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 7, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, January 8, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, March 4, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, April 20, 1883.

Nast-like . . ." quality which marked them both.⁶⁶ Adams responded to his brother's critique:

No; never, since Cain wrote his last newspaper article about Abel was there anything so droll . . . Poor though I be, I am richer than common men can dream of, so long as I have the whole Arabian Nights [sic], the Odyssey [sic], and Alice in the Looking Glass [sic] all crowded into one small page of fraternal writing.⁶⁷

Adams commented in 1882 that even Senator George H. Pendleton represented the book. He delighted in the complimentary English, German, and French editions, published shortly after the book appeared. Apparently he had finally overcome the "rooted opposition" to his books. He was being read, and could still enjoy that thrill of satisfaction which he had experienced when the Review had been favorably noticed by the English quarterlies.⁶⁸

Adams' intent in the Democracy was obvious to those who read it. He pointed up the degeneracy that inevitably attended the surrender of principle in the face of political expediency. Mrs. Lee, the heroine of the novel, in search of meaning in life, meant to find it through a study of democracy in action. She found, as did Adams himself, that democracy degenerated as easily as any other form of government. But the chaos of degradation appalled the more because of the ephemeral promise extended by the purity of a democratic system rightly applied. Mrs. Lee refused to compromise herself, after being led into a position

⁶⁶Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, February 2, 1884 (Herein are the comments concerning his brother's review); Cater, Henry Adams, p. xliv; Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 336, footnote.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 30, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, September 3, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 13, 1871.

from which her only avenue of escape was to run. To her chagrin, she ran to a life more meaningless than before, because the promise of fulfillment in life offered by democracy had been destroyed. The moral shone clear for Adams, and he only attempted to convey to the American public the fate awaiting them should corrective measures be neglected. Adams demonstrated his purpose by copying so obviously from the political milieu about Washington. He had put to record his own experiences.⁶⁹

Adams recorded his personal experiences when he wrote the novel he chose to entitle Democracy. In another sense, Adams wrote social history. His concern during these years was to develop the techniques being demanded of him by the larger task set before him. The study in character and inter-relationships among various types of characters -- Democracy was most noteworthy in this respect -- served him well when he attempted to subtly trace the personalities of Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Clay, Calhoun, or any other of the figures so prominent in the History. Adams learned well and the first application of his newly acquired skill offered further practice. The exercises in character study and social history underwent a test in fire when Adams attempted to write the biography of one of the most enigmatic, inscrutable and fascinating men in American history.

The effort aborted before ever really starting, as Adams recognized nothing enigmatic, inscrutable, fascinating, even interesting about John Randolph. He revealingly complained of having to take that "lunatic monkey" seriously.⁷⁰ Adams simply could not, and his predilection de-

⁶⁹Adams, Democracy, passim; Miller, "Henry Adams," p. 123; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 24-33; Levenson, Henry Adams, p. 85; Adams, Democracy, "Introduction" by Samuels.

⁷⁰Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, September 3, 1882.

tracted from the quality of the biography. Levenson finds saving grace in the idea that Adams projected an investigation of ". . . the extreme variant of the species . . .," in Darwinian terminology.⁷¹ Adams averred that he meant to study and develop the character of Randolph in much the same way that Cervantes had treated Spanish characteristics through Don Quixote. Obviously Adams' success contrasted badly with the achievement of Cervantes. The great Spaniard knew and sympathized with his subjects, while Adams indulged a predisposition to condemn and calumniate from the outset. Displeased with the book before it ever reached the public, he characterized it an "intellectual brat," a simile used by Adams thereafter when he meant to deprecate his own efforts at literature.⁷²

In the Randolph, Adams surveyed the activities of the Jeffersonians after they had obtained power. He characterized John Randolph as the most Jeffersonian of the Jeffersonians, yet found that he had been enthusiastically eager to promote the same abuses of which he complained so violently when John Adams and the Federalists reigned as the perpetrators. Even when Randolph abandoned Jefferson in 1805-1806, Adams refused to give him credit. Randolph simply acted out of the ambitious drive for the power of a popular tribune, not from conviction or principle. Adams seemed bent upon destroying any claim Randolph may have had to a principled stand, and perhaps because Randolph claimed liberalism while remaining over-protective of the institution of slavery. Adams frankly was at a loss to understand the Southern character, an

⁷¹Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 99-100, 102-103.

⁷²Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, October 8, 1882; Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 102-103.

enigma still fascinating to him in 1907. But, the exertion required to depict a Randolph seemingly without consistency or enduring qualities provided excellent practice for Adams. At the same time he worked diligently on the second volume of the History. In this respect, the Randolph comprised but one ingredient that went to make up the synthesis Adams developed in his opus.⁷³

When John T. Morse asked Adams to do the Randolph in early 1881, he was engrossed in the second volume of the History. In June, Adams wrote the Harvard librarian requesting that he be allowed to utilize the newspaper collection in the Harvard Library. He informed the librarian that after four or five years of labor, his research had reached a point where a search through the newspapers of the period to catalog contemporary reaction promised to complete the effort.⁷⁴ His second volume neared completion when he announced the Randolph ready for the press in July, 1881, after but three months in the writing. He intended to launch immediately a biography of Aaron Burr, meaning to have it included in the Morse series of works on great American statesmen.⁷⁵

Within a year's time, Adams finished the biography of Burr, and flared irately when John Morse refused to include it in his series on

⁷³Henry Adams, John Randolph, of the American Statesmen Series, edited by John T. Morse (New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1894), passim (Hereafter: Adams, Randolph); Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 34-43; Levenson, Henry Adams, p. 113. For a comparison see Russell Kirk, Randolph of Roanoke: A Study in Conservative Thought (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), passim.

⁷⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Justin Winsor (Harvard Librarian), June 6, 1881 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 106-107).

⁷⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Isaac W. MacVeagh, July 9, 1881 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 109); Hochfield, Henry Adams, p. 34.

the grounds that Burr had not been a statesman.⁷⁶ Adams thought it an outrage, indicating his somewhat sympathetic attitude toward Burr and his doubtful recognition of accepted "statesmen."⁷⁷ Acquiescing in view of inevitability, he wrote in 1883 that he planned to shelve the Burr study for some time, as he had no desire to build a reputation through prolific publication.⁷⁸ The manuscript, either lost or destroyed by Adams, never reappeared, to the disappointment of Adams' biographers. Undoubtedly, Adams further developed the theme projected for the History, and it is possible to perceive a close and extensive investigation of Burr in the pertinent chapters of the History.⁷⁹ All of Adams' productive endeavor during these years aimed at promoting the success of his opus.

The work on the History progressed smoothly, and Adams enjoyed a pleasant series of winters in Washington, summers at the Adams' summer home, Beverly Farms, and a combination of work and pleasure at either location well calculated to inspire an attitude of satisfaction with life, or an extreme ennui, however one's disposition inclined. Adams worked steadily, writing five hours every morning, his only resemblance to Carlyle he remarked after reading the latter's Memoirs in 1883.⁸⁰

⁷⁶Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, October 8, 1882.

⁷⁷Ibid.; "He should live a while at Washington and know our real statesmen"; Adams aimed this barb at Morse.

⁷⁸Henry Adams, History of the United States of America During the Second Administration of Thomas Jefferson, Volume III of The History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), pp. 228 ff. (Hereafter: Adams, History, I, II, III, etc. The titles vary from volume to volume).

⁸⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 9, 1883.

But Adams had not learned all of the incumbent skills as yet. He read everything in print that dealt with the period of history he studied, and much else besides. While gathering knowledge from any source available, and reading critically various books to ascertain stylistic weaknesses, Adams tried to develop his theme and style to the degree he thought worthy of his History. His first attempt at character study and moralizing had concentrated on the experience garnered from life itself. In that analysis, Adams had not carried his theme to the extension he sought, and the rectifying opportunity took form in a second novel he published, pseudonymously, in 1884.⁸¹

Adams finished the manuscript for his second novel in late 1883, and the book was subsequently published in March, 1884, under the pseudonym of Francis Snow Compton.⁸² Esther followed the pattern laid down in Democracy, but carried the theme to a logical conclusion. When Mrs. Lee had fled from Washington and Radcliffe, she had faced a world more meaningless than before. The disillusionment of a lost ideal corresponded to Adams' own frame of mind immediately after the debacle of 1876. But Adams retained his faith in the adaptability of man, the teleological element in human history, and the vitality of a democratic system. In Esther, the heroine abnegated inspired love rather than sacrifice her intellectual integrity. Esther found that she must sacrifice either her own well-being or a love which promised to destroy her

⁸¹Letter, Henry Adams to Samuel Jones Tilden, January 24, 1881 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 125-126); letter, Henry Adams to Daniel Coit Gilman, February 22, 1883 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 126); letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 30, 1883; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 29, 1883.

⁸²Letter, Henry Adams to Henry Holt, November 9, 1883 (Cater, Henry Adams, p. 128. See the footnote on the same page).

freedom and dignity as a rational being. The lesson was clear: Adams meant to demonstrate more vividly that Americans must surrender their love for things material, or at least temper it with considerations of higher moral law pervading all of life that was worthwhile. Man must first of all be true to himself and the obligations he owed to humanity.⁸³

Once more Adams used the lessons of life to point the duty incumbent upon American society if that society aspired to the high potential inherently a part of its make-up. In this short book, Adams admitted his own faith in the unity of the universe, the ability of men to find that unity, and his conviction that the American could find a cause worthy of self-sacrifice and pursue it. He developed his theme, and there awaited merely the application of it to the course of American history to test its suitability. His original dictates had been fulfilled: He had discovered and defined the object to be traced through the "labyrinths of law and literature," and had acquired the prerequisite knowledge for executing the task. He had in fact been at work on his project since September, 1879.⁸⁴

Adams persevered in his self-appointed duty to American society until 1888, when he noted in his diary that the History was done. Characteristically conscious of the amount of effort and sacrifice he had injected into the production, he predicted that he would receive little reward.⁸⁵ On September 23 of that year he wrote to Hay relating that

⁸³Adams, Esther, passim; letter, Henry Adams to Henry Holt, January 6, 1885, and letter, Henry Adams to Henry Holt, January 8, 1885 (Both letters found in Cater, Henry Adams, p. 136-138); Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 44-54.

⁸⁴Adams, Esther, pp. 296, 354-56; letter, Henry Adams to James R. Lowell, September 24, 1879.

⁸⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 16, 1888.

he had ". . . for a week . . . been in vain trying to do Gibbon and walk up and down my garden."⁸⁶ He desponded because inclement weather restrained him from following the example of that great master who had suffered even less than Adams believed he himself had. The gloom and pessimism that marked Adams' attitude had been triggered by the suicide of his wife in December, 1885. Adams lost nearly six years in extreme self-pity and moribund despondency. Brutal as it sounds, the shock of disaster and the accompanying sense of irretrievable loss bestowed a therapeutic beneficence upon the life of Henry Adams. For some years he had been quietly slipping into a lethargy that threatened mortal injury to his ambition. Association and inclination induced him to accept the attitude of the artistic elite of his time.⁸⁷ He began to affect the attributes -- aptly described by Van Wyck Brooks in his standard, New England Indian Summer⁸⁸ -- of that class of people he had fiercely deprecated during the Harvard years. Brooks has noted that the emphasis placed on culture by the artistic intelligentsia of the late nineteenth century led them to deny their own well being. They concerned themselves with the promotion of an attitude or impression of artistic ennui, rather than exhibiting that zest for life and confidence in self so discernible in earlier American figures distinguished in the worlds of art and literature.⁸⁹

⁸⁶Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, September 23, 1888.

⁸⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 13, 1884; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 3, 1884; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, March 22, 1885. For an inclination of the tendency in Henry Adams, see a letter to Charles M. Gaskell, January 13, 1870.

⁸⁸Brooks, Indian Summer, Chapters I-III, passim, and especially p. 449.

⁸⁹Ibid.; Cargill, Intellectual America, pp. 556-557.

The shock of loss that accompanied his wife's suicide awakened Adams and stimulated a re-orientation of outlook and plan of life, painful yet crucial to the emergence of the fully mature Adams personality. A change so complex and demoralizing defied effectuation with any degree of facility or immediacy. Time, hard work to busy the mind, and diversion provided Adams with the elements necessary for adjustment. Diversion came in the form of the Platonic relationship with Mrs. Donald Cameron -- who had been a close friend of Mrs. Adams -- while the voyages to Japan, Cuba, and the South Seas lent variety. Again, Adams came to see the worth of life, and it seemed all the more vivid because the senses had been reawakened. The initial shock of his wife's death had opened his eyes, in the same way that Esther had caught a glimpse of the "real" upon her father's death.⁹⁰ Ultimately shock followed, and reaction triumphed for some years. Adams wrote that he had lost the ability to feel, but his experiences proved that he had only failed to try his senses which would show a renewed perceptiveness and vigor. Japan, Cuba and the South Seas displayed to Adams a new world of color and feeling, at once less frigid and more poignant when sensed rather than explained.⁹¹

Adams erred in judgment when he declared the History finished in 1888. In December, he began to rewrite the first volume, and revision continued until November, 1889, with the first two volumes in print. In April, 1890, Adams wrote Gaskell that half of the History was "out,"

⁹⁰Adams, Esther, p. 296.

⁹¹Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 192-264 (These letters prove the contention.); Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 191-199.

but that it lacked appeal as ". . . a pleasant book for English reading."⁹² The reasoning behind the statement underscored the apparent autochthonous purposefulness of the work. Adams chose to write of the early liberal movement to find the reason for failure in the late nineteenth century, and consequently point the way for a society desperately in need of re-orientation. In the course of his work, Adams developed a style and skill in scholarship synchronous with the production of great pieces of historical literature. The fact that he revised before publishing indicated that Adams mastered his art as he mastered his topic. He claimed that he wrote for the Americans of fifty years in the future, and perhaps more than an element of rationalization inhered in the profession of aim.⁹³ At least one critic said that Adams wrote as Gibbon had before, and that he experienced acute disappointment when his work failed as accepted accoutrements for "every table."⁹⁴

Adams' treatment of the history of the Jefferson and Madison presidencies had been adumbrated in Gallatin, Randolph, "Burr" (presumably), Democracy, and Esther. Adams presented the narrative in a quick, epigrammatic style, choosing his evidence well to promote the theme he thought incarnate in the unfolding of American history. He demonstrated that the Jefferson forces had not even applied their theories of government once they had occupied the positions of power. Misled by their own confidence, they realized too late the corruptive influence of power and

⁹²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 13, 1890 (Ford, Letters (1858-1891), p. 403); diary, December 23, 1888; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 10, 1889.

⁹³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 3, 1884.

⁹⁴Samuels, Young Adams, "Epilogue," and especially pp. 304-306.

politics. Randolph perceived the trend of things earlier than any of the leaders, with the exception of Gallatin. Jefferson came to realize the defection late in life, and the realization obtruded the more intensively when a younger generation swept aside the old in the years between 1812 and 1817. The disinterested stand advocated by Jefferson and Madison surrendered to new forces concerned with demands for protective tariffs and internal improvements, and soon degenerated into a fight between the various sections of the country for equal share of the political booty. Certain tendencies and trends had been developed within the years of Republicanism, and Adams saw that some of these would be lasting. Some appeared beneficial, some detrimental. The lesson Adams extracted pointed with regret to the ease with which the idealism of democratic faith had been swept aside. Jefferson and Madison had been confident of success in 1800. In 1817, the future of America lay in the balance between the urge to satisfy personal interests and the concern for the welfare of the nation as a whole. Adams knew from experience that the wrong tack had been chosen. His message warned a society dumb to the tendencies of an "acquisitive" spirit, showing that the way back led to freedom, accomplishment, and individual fulfillment. Americans had no choice, for to continue their present course promised a rapid plunge into degeneracy, culminating in extinction of freedom and penetrating frustration for the nation as well as for the individual.⁹⁵

The History was Adams' masterpiece. He dedicated sixteen years

⁹⁵Adams, History, Vol. I-IX, and especially IX. The aim of this paper is not historical criticism, but to demonstrate that Adams wrote the History with the intention of presenting to the American public the nature of the choice before them. See also Levenson, Henry Adams, 63-67, 185-189; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 55-86; Samuels, Young Adams, "Epilogue," and pp. 303-306.

of drudgery, mental and physical, in the production of a piece of literature that he felt would benefit American society. A self-conscious air of sacrifice about Adams lent the impression that American society merited the effort to reform it. He knew he had written good history. He deliberately injected that peculiar endemic quality that at once derived from and struck in bold relief his major purpose. He meant that Americans would realize the nature of their failure in social experimentation. He began at the immediate departure from the American ideal, thereby focusing upon the extremes to which error had progressed. Adams believed that American society still retained enough of the incipient vitality and exuberance requisite for the supreme effort of self-correction. He pointed the grossness of failure in the conviction that to do so would initiate a reform-minded awareness.⁹⁶

In accordance with his idea of historical scholarship, Adams utilized what has been since termed the "naturalist" technique. He attempted to present a photographic representation of the social milieu being studied. His production, as a mirror, reflected the circumstances and phenomena attendant upon the atmosphere of the time. His failure, the failure of all naturalists, resulted from his unsuccessful attempt to shed his own predilections and attitudes. If man be considered a product of his times, his environment, his particular heritage, it becomes painfully apparent that attitudes and ideas reflect and are modified by the conditions attending man's existence at any specified time. The naturalist claim of "objectivity" seems better expressed as a

⁹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 18, 1871; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 5-10, 24-33, 55-86, 115-139; Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 185-89.

"relative objectivity," as history can have no meaning unless conceived of in terms of what went before and what came after. Adams claimed no such "objectivity" but confessed that he thought of history as a series of relationships, a sequence. With this confession in mind, Adams' intent in the History opens itself to observation, as does the technique.

Adams adopted naturalism in the sense that he used the facts gathered from daily life to present a detailed portrait of events in history. But his selection of facts to be used, from the vast array available, laid bare a rationalization symptomatic of the whole naturalistic school in literature. While professing a complete detachment and disclaiming any tendency toward moral judgments, the naturalists at the same time selected for study subjects and topics with implicit moral connotations. Adams subjected his History to the same method, and in doing so, admitted that he proposed to point a lesson to society.⁹⁷

The lesson that Adams pointed was one of both social and individual implications. His attitude toward history verified his acceptance

⁹⁷Adams, History, Vols. I-IX, passim. For comparison, and for verification of these contentions, see: Irving Brant, James Madison, Secretary of State, 1800-1809 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1953), passim; Irving Brant, James Madison, The President, 1809-1812 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1956), passim; Irving Brant, James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1961), pp. 13-434, passim; Morton Borden, "Thomas Jefferson," found in America's Ten Greatest Presidents, edited by Morton Borden (Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1961), pp. 57-80, passim. For naturalism see: Persons, American Minds, pp. 334-346; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 315-333; Spiller, Literary History, Chapters 62, 65, 71, and 72, passim; Cargill, Intellectual America, Chapter I, passim; Lewis Mumford, The Golden Day, A Study in American Experience and Culture (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1926), Chapter VI, passim. (Hereafter: Mumford, Golden Day); and see also the novels and short stories of Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Sherwood Anderson and Stephen Crane listed in the appended bibliography.

of an evolutionary sequence in the development of man and the earth within the correlates of time and space. But, much as Noah Porter, he conceived of a design behind that unfolding of events. The determinism of this attitude is apparent, but was again modified by Adams' conviction that men could control and, perhaps, beneficially hurry the evolutionary process, the "reform" Darwinist idea. History was indeed "a tangled skein," but man could if he would, untangle that confused mass and trace the development of institutions and ideas. By utilizing the lessons obtained from a methodical study of history, man could better his environment, himself, even human nature.

Adams believed each man, by direct bestowal, embodied a distinct and personal potential, the realization of which was man's first duty to self and society. Social considerations were secondary to Adams. The primary concern was the individual within society. He had learned that social reform could not be effectuated unless individual reforms were previously consummated. The lessons of Democracy and Esther, subsequently undergirding the History, taught the necessity of personal integrity. If each individual lived up to his duty under the social fabric, the need for social reform would disintegrate.

Adams' conception of the need for reform grounded in an awareness of contemporary conditions and an appreciation for evolutionary changes in these conditions. Since the Jeffersonians had first posited reform, conditions had undergone drastic transformations. Adams was aware that conditions, to a large extent, decided the character of men. The great problem causing so much frustration in late nineteenth century America claimed solution only by the alterations of the social structures corresponding to changed conditions. Adams felt that Americans would

ultimately realize the need for adjustment, but he also saw that a mere conformity to past examples lacked relevance to contemporary circumstances. Observation had taught that society, as water, followed the course of least resistance. There was ample opportunity for the natural leader to point the way for America. Adams accepted the challenge, perhaps the supreme test of the man and the artist.⁹⁸

⁹⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 25, 1877; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 18, 1871; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 2-4, 5-10, 24-33, 55-86, 115-139; Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 63-67, 85, 185-189; Brooks, Indian Summer, p. 270; Thwing, "Henry Adams," pp. 232-234; Donovan, Henry Adams, pp. 37-38; Persons, American Minds, pp. 334-336; Gabriel, Democratic Thought, pp. 315-333; Miller, "Henry Adams," p. 123; Samuels, Young Adams, "Epilogue"; Wister, Roosevelt, pp. 47-52; Adams, History, Vol. IX; Adams, Esther, pp. 296, 354-356; Adams, Education, p. 498; letter, Henry Adams to Oliver W. Holmes, December 21, 1884 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 133-134); letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 24, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 12, 1882; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 29, 1885; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 25, 1886; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 1, 1887; letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Elizabeth Cameron, September 16, 1888; Commager, American Mind, pp. 132-140; Spiller, Literary History, pp. 1080-1103; Michael Kraus, A History of American History (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1937), pp. 321-335; letter, Henry Adams to Samuel Jones Tilden, January 24, 1883 (Cater, Henry Adams, pp. 125-126); Adams, Democracy, passim.

CHAPTER III

"EVERY MAN IS HIS OWN ARTIST"

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"EVERY MAN IS HIS OWN ARTIST"

Late nineteenth century America lay open to Adams as a book with the covers ripped and the pages strewn about in a confusing array of print and illustration. Adams, methodical in every endeavor, looked, learned and wrote penetratingly about the phenomena he observed. His comments concerning the degeneration of American society, directive and indicative of the thoughts coursing through his mind, revealed a reformer who appreciated the entire scope of human activity in America rather than merely the political. In 1870-1872, Adams was essentially a political reformer, but with the failures of his many reform attempts, he observed that something more was required than mere political action. The attitude slowly dawned that American society suffered from a congenital deficiency of which political and social incongruities were but symptomatic. He looked behind the wall of everyday occurrence to ascertain the hidden problem so disruptive and chaotic in its ramifications.

When the panic of 1873 struck the nation with such unprecedented intensity, Adams noted the prolonged effect on land value and income.¹ The miasma of depression started a chain of thought in Adams' mind that culminated in the development of a fundamentally altered opinion of the societal structure. In 1874, Adams predicted a new orientation in the future society of America, with the laboring and capital classes making up the liberal and conservative forces respectively. He looked first

¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 26, 1873.

for the country to undergo a pervasive conservative reaction, necessarily followed by an entirely different social arrangement.² His view, not limited simply to the American situation, included a world movement in which downtrodden races would revenge themselves.³ Mrs. Adams seemed to express her husband's thought succinctly when she noted that the ". . . 39,000,000 [Englishmen], who get no cake and ale, think it's about time for the 1,000,000, who do, to treat."⁴

Adams' basic faith in evolution and man's ability to better himself did not waver over the course of the years. In 1882, just after the assassination of President Garfield and before Adams perceived the furor that the murder aroused, he remarked that "Man is still going fast-upward."⁵ Incongruities remained, as the cost of living, even in view of the tremendous supply verified. He concluded that conditions made mandatory a subdivision of capital, because the ". . . workingmen as a class are still too poor."⁶ In June he had expressed a real concern for the seriousness of the current labor agitation, declaring that contemporary society was being ". . . threatened by inevitable change. . . ."⁷ He collected statistics to disprove Henry George's thesis that poverty accompanied progress, concluding that the average American was ". . . twice as well off now [1882] as in 1800, in spite of Mr. George.

²Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, July 6, 1874.

³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 10, 1881.

⁴Letter, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, June 22, 1879 (Thoron, Letters, p. 145).

⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 24, 1882.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, June 25, 1882.

. . ."⁸ He admitted that his calculations lacked definitive authority, but even so, any error altered the ratio of increase only in degree.⁹ If the ratio, whatever it was, remained ". . . constant, the world has settled its material problem and will soon turn to its intellectual one."¹⁰ Applying his thoughts to the situation in England, he affirmed that the solution for the economic and political problems in that country consisted ". . . chiefly . . . of . . . subdividing the wealth so as to raise the lower classes nearer to the average. Once done I do not doubt it will stay done, but to do it without a shock requires a good fifty years."¹¹

When the depression of 1884 struck, Adams attributed the financial crisis to ". . . want of honesty and want of judgment" within the economy.¹² The panic stimulated a popular distrust of financiers. However, positive benefit accompanied the exposure of corruption, even though the innocent suffered with the guilty. Adams declared that ". . . economy is going to be a practical science."¹³ The speculation and over-investment that usually culminated in crashes would be corrected when the public became so outraged as to demand honest and efficient handling of securities and investments.¹⁴ Adams pointed to the vast potential of the country and averred that it would be realized as soon as the people learned how to spend judiciously.¹⁵ He knew that a new economic structure

⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 12, 1882.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 18, 1884.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 24, 1884.

¹⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, September 30, 1885.

consisting in big business and industry necessitated some adjustment. He implied that the alteration of the social structure approached immutably despite the opposition of government and influential classes within society.

The year 1885 marked the beginning of a penetrating change in Adams' life and outlook. In that momentous year he lost father-in-law and wife almost in one fell stroke. The shock laid waste his previously quiet existence, but cleared the mind of trivia for a brief span of time before reaction set in. In the spring of 1886, Adams noted that all indicators pointed to the growth of a new and alien societal structure, presently in embryonic stages, but promising vast contrast to contemporary arrangements.¹⁶ He stoically accepted the impending transformation, a change certain to reduce the role of his generation to that of mute observers. Unmoved by the thought of such a position within society, Adams wrote that he ". . . always did like the theatre, though . . . [his] . . . only ambition was to write the play."¹⁷ Never more articulate, in these few words he gave voice to his desire to guide social development in the direction he thought right. He pointed out the incompatibility of existent American political practices with the emerging order. "Our politics are already old-fashioned -- quite thrown aside by the now social movements," movements culminating in the rash of social unrest visible in the Haymarket Affair, extensive strikes and agrarian agitation, such as the Grange, the Alliances and burgeoning Populism.¹⁸ He

¹⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 25, 1886.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, July 21, 1886.

realized more emphatically that society, insensitive to the changes occurring daily, ". . . except for a few discontented people or classes, seems to blunder on with no distinct idea where it wants to come out."¹⁹ Adams, as he had for years, worked to promote an awareness within society so that the efforts of the country could be directed toward some positive goal.

America lacked ideas, interest and ambition, in Adams' analysis. The dominant philosophy, if such a credo be rightly considered a philosophy, emphasized nothing except ". . . to feed, clothe and amuse oneself."²⁰ The road to destruction yawned before the American nation, but no one showed enough interest to worry.²¹ Adams himself, intent upon finishing the History, expressed a fervid desire to escape to the ". . . new world which is the old," specifically to China.²² His attitude at this juncture derived from his bereaved state of mind and from the conviction that any attempt at reforming the situation depended for success upon popular support. Twenty years of political activity had demonstrated that in America, public opinion alone, though slow to arousal, guaranteed action. Adams awaited an auspicious moment to initiate a reform movement, but felt certain that the time rapidly drew near. He prophesied that within fifty years most of the world's "cultivable" land would be taken, auguring some adjustment within society.²³ He framed no correctives for the social problems, but maintained that the obligation incumbent

¹⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, January 17, 1887.

²⁰Ibid. (Underlining added for emphasis; Adams was subject to the same tendency).

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887.

upon the acute observer consisted in merely posing the question, not in solving it. Victor Hugo had attempted to resolve a similar question for the French, and the result had been disaster.²⁴ Adams waited upon response, all that a reformer could ask.

But Adams' interest included more than just economic considerations. He felt the deficiency of the whole society, and believed that the correction of this deeper maladjustment involved the elimination of incidental concerns. The country lacked conscious goals or traditions to guide the way to fulfillment of potential. He knew that the resultant drift did not necessarily have to be beneficial. Some exertion of leadership appeared crucial to insure that progress avoided frustration in the morass of indirection. The dearth of good work accomplished in the arts during the late nineteenth century derived from a cultural lack, at once a symptom and a cause of the serious flaws in the social structure. He commented often and mordaciously about the paucity of talented men produced by the United States.

In 1875, Adams began a crusade against ". . . culture with a big C."²⁵ He had previously been quite taken with the cultured atmosphere at Harvard, but now he expressed nothing but ridicule for the institution and its leaders.²⁶ The change in attitude very probably resulted from the realization that the Harvard "culture" lacked any relationship to American experience. His studies in medievalism had convinced him of the stimulating effect of an accepted ethos stemming from a shared

²⁴Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 1, 1887.

²⁵Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 4, 1875.

²⁶Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, March 6, 1871.

national or ethnic history.²⁷ The dearth of competent men in the arts came as a consequence of a stultified culture, a mere replica of the European model. Adams knew Europe well, and realized that the American situation demanded a unique culture pertinent to the American experience. His studies of Europe, and his observations, stimulated ideas concerning art and literature, as representative of a national tradition. One lamentable example of the American tendencies, to Adams, allowed no "happy medium" as to class structure. He noted no strict horizontal divisions, although he felt them, but pointed to the current conception that forced a man to be either a "country squire" or a "city gent."²⁸ This type of attitude ill fitted a democratic society. Implied within Adams' position resided the idea that distinctions ought to be made on the basis of merit alone. His continual struggle for recognition, often sublimated into an impression of cynical superiority, revealed much about his opinion of a well adjusted society. Adams interested himself in the promotion of a balanced, equitable social system for both humanitarian and personal reasons.

In 1871 Adams read Viollet le Duc's book on the architecture of the middle ages. At that time he was lecturing on the ". . . principles of historical art. . . ."²⁹ The necessity to learn before being able to teach aided in the development of definite ideas concerning art. The Harvard years brought the benefit of training, in history, the arts and

²⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 27, 1871; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 4, 1874; Adams, Essays, passim, especially the introductory chapter by Adams.

²⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887.

²⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, March 27, 1871.

scholarship. By 1875, Adams' education had been virtually completed, at least to the extent that anything lacking required correction through application of lessons thus far learned. Exercises in historical scholarship and a vivid awareness of contemporary conditions called forth the reformer in Adams. When he left Harvard, he launched a reform program, though at times an unconscious one, aimed at correcting the basic errors that cause a degenerate society.

The function of an artist was to evoke the higher qualities of man. The artist should not merely deprecate but adhere to a fixed set of fundamental rules which rendered his product into an artistic creation.³⁰ Adams' reaction to the later works of Tenneyson, Arnold, Ruskin and Carlyle demonstrated his idea of an artist's function, while witnessing that Adams himself did not really fit within his own definition.³¹ He meant to stir the public into a reaction against the strictures he vented upon American degeneracy. If he aroused thoughtful opposition, some beneficial result would be forthcoming, as incidental to the increased awareness.

The emphasis on a lack of culture increased in Adams after his marriage. Marion Hooper Adams was a connoisseur, in the sense that Lewis Mumford used the word. She revelled in the rich culture of the past, finding a day in a German museum almost overwhelming in its effect on the senses. Her letters of 1872-73, and 1879-80, written while the

³⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, January 17, 1887.

³¹Ibid.; letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Elizabeth Cameron, April 28, 1888; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887. Adams deprecated the efforts of the artists mentioned above, but followed their example; they pointed up degeneracy and approaching doom.

Adamses travelled in Europe, indicated that Adams received a wide introduction to the art of the ages. Marion Adams deprecated the efforts of modern artists, and remained a slave to the past, just as Mrs. Jack Gardner had -- the maternal New England collector who established her home as a trove of art fragments.³² Adams appreciated the priceless value of this past effort, but desired something new, something indicative of American experience and promise. In Esther he betrayed almost chauvinistic impulses in the urge for an American art.³³

Adams urged a national and realistic art. His comments concerning the sexlessness of American art pointed out the deficiency within the refusal to utilize man's basic drives to appeal to his sensibility.³⁴ The comments about sex were reflective in that Adams wanted not only the injection of the sex drive, but most others as well.³⁵ By adhering to this canon, the artist awakened in the observer's mind an awareness of the relationship of daily living to any concepts of good or evil which he conveyed.³⁶

Adams' call for a uniquely American art carried over into architecture. He studied the styles and types of the various periods in European history, and determined to support the man competent and courageous enough to start a new school in America. When he decided to

³²Letters, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, written during the years 1872-1873 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 24, ff.); Letters, Marion Adams to Dr. Hooper, written during the years 1879-1880 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 143, ff.); Mumford, Golden Day, pp. 199-232.

³³Adams, Esther, pp. 242, 230-255, 310, and passim.

³⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 8, 1872.

³⁵Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, August 25, 1886; Adams, Education, p. 385.

³⁶Both Oscar Cargill and Henry Steele Commager view Adams as a "Freudian irrationalist."

build his house in Washington, he called on Henry Hobson Richardson to create for him ". . . a new form of domestic architecture."³⁷ Richardson, an old friend and also an architectural innovator, responded to the challenge of the changing needs of an urban society. Adams realized the potential in Richardson, the potential to make use of the truly great efforts of the past to develop an American architecture that reflected the American experience of change from an agrarian to an urban society.³⁸ He hoped that the American public would see the ideas behind Richardson's work. Society had erred so generously in the past, but Adams retained a belief that appreciation would ultimately be awakened.³⁹

By 1891, Adams had observed what there was to see in America. The cultural deficiency caused the major flaw he uncovered, after tracing down misleading appearances. He felt that to correct this apparent evil would be to set right the whole social structure. Behind this impression stood the idea that men produced good work only when they reflected the ideas and customs built up by a people sharing a common experience. Men needed some common ground from which to work, some set of traditional beliefs to serve as an anchor buoy, insuring a stable, progressive, organic development. His interest in art was always intense, since his earliest remembrances. But, a new element entered when he came to appreciate art as indicative of the state of society in which it was produced. His later dictum that "Everyman is his own artist. . ." implied that

³⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, March 22, 1885.

³⁸Lewis Mumford, The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932), pp. 1-56, 107-182 (Hereafter: Mumford, Brown Decades).

³⁹Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, November 14, 1885.

certain universal truths became visible to every man when he viewed an artistic creation. Also embraced within that phrase lay the idea that a cultural unity vitalized the life of a society by rendering the membership into beings capable of perceiving higher truths about man, society and the universe.⁴⁰

Adams' reaction to the cultural lack assumed proportions quite in character. He announced that he despaired of ever seeing good work produced again.⁴¹ He sounded the depths of despair, but a tone of reservation, notably present, qualified his despondency. In 1888, he condemned Arnold for failing to find any ". . . new things to say . . . [and]. . . observe . . . he . . . reproduced only his old formulas."⁴² Adams stated his objection plainly, and he aimed the criticism not only at Arnold. His earlier missiles fired at Tenmyson, Ruskin and Carlyle indicated that Adams recognized a world-wide cultural lag. He demanded an awareness of contemporary changes among the artistic elite. Art and institutions begged alteration to fit new circumstantial exigencies. Adams exerted himself in an attempt to bring about a reconciliation between men and their times.

Adams felt that artists, scientists, landlords, and historians of late nineteenth century America depended on money in an acquisitive sense.⁴³

⁴⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles F. Adams, Jr., August 3, 1891 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 458-59); letter, Henry Adams to E. D. Shaw, December 20, 1904 (Thoron, Letters, p. 458).

⁴¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887 (Many letters to the same effect are in existence).

⁴²Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, May 27, 1888 (Underlining is superimposed for emphasis).

⁴³Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, October 29, 1889. Also, Frederick T. Martin, The Passing of the Idle Rich (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1911), passim, and specifically pp. 136-138, 316, 219-239, 247.

He discerned and rebelled against the "pragmatic acquiescence" of a society that based action upon the personal whims and needs of the moment.⁴⁴ Even those who conceivably knew better followed the course of least resistance. Adams condemned the artists of the period on the grounds that "All considerable artists make a point of compelling the public to think for itself. . . ."⁴⁵ He declared that the artist should pose the question and allow society to answer it.⁴⁶ Following his own dictum, he succeeded in postulating fundamental questions in both Democracy and Esther. In his History, he thrust his point boldly at the American weakness, and reacted with sharp disappointment when he saw his work ignored. But, in his idea of art, the History had been successful, as he had posed the question, even though he condemned at the same time.

Adams proclaimed his History out of date by the time he finished it. He retained an artistic attachment to the work, but implied that viewpoints toward history were as subject to change as were institutions.⁴⁷ A "new history" to fit new conditions would be required. New men would write it, and Adams advised them to abandon the ". . . cemetery theory and female story-telling."⁴⁸ He felt his method was sound, but perhaps

⁴⁴Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 109-203; Mumford, Golden Day, pp. 157-164; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, January 17, 1887.

⁴⁵Adams, Esther, p. 310; letter, Henry Adams to E. D. Shaw, December 20, 1904 (Thoron, Letters, pp. 458-459. Adams expressed in explicit terms his former almost unconscious theoretical position).

⁴⁶Letter, Henry Adams to John Hay, May 1, 1887.

⁴⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, December 12, 1886.

⁴⁸Letter, Henry Adams to T. F. Dwight, September 13, 1885; letter Henry Adams to John W. Field, September 20, 1885.

his attitude and predilections had warped the final product. His disdain for contemporary figures in history apparent, the undergirding reason presented itself as clearly. Adams felt that written history, like culture, reflected the state of society. More to the point, the historian had the unique opportunity to act both as a narrator and as a director of public opinion and thought. The historian, who fulfilled his duties well, offered to society the lessons extracted from the history of mankind. If the lessons were well taken and presented accordingly, better planning for the future resulted.⁴⁹

In his History, Adams expressed the idea of an America destined to create a new race of men, a new type.⁵⁰ A new type of man would require cultural uniqueness, a new and altered emphasis on material and spiritual things. Basing a new culture on old ideas was well and good, but a worthwhile culture must be indigent, to Adams. European ideas had no direct validity in the American experiment. Hence the American was forced to develop his own native ethos. Adams voiced concern for the hesitant and sporadic growth of an American culture of pervasive character. He felt that the development of a worthy culture began when an elevated sense of responsibility and duty prevailed among the citizenry of a country. Conversely, the development of a worthy culture made possible the production of men of talent and genius within the country. Men of talent always existed, but needed that ideal provided by an inspiring tradition of achievement.⁵¹

⁴⁹See above, footnote No. 51, p. 78; Commager, American Mind, p. 441.

⁵⁰Adams, History, Vol. I, Chapters I-VI, passim. Also Adams, History, Vol. IX, passim.

⁵¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887.

Adams' contribution to the development of an autochthonous American culture assumed the form of satire cast upon the imitation that had risen in the wake of the Civil War. Other intellectuals of the period saw the incongruity of culture and conditions, but turned away, either uncaring or overly willing to escape to Europe and a ready-made set of ideas donned as one slipped into the role of an observer. Americans were of a unique type, because of their frontier experience and the American environment in general. Adams postulated the need for reform, not just of political practices, but of the incumbent social structure. His strictures, caustic and vital in their implications, struck at the very heart of the problem. He postulated a reformation of the individual as a prerequisite to any alteration of the social arrangements. If the individual lived up to his responsibility as a person, as a social being, the social and political dissonance would be eradicated. If the individual lived up to the potential within himself, the lack of a meritorious culture would be automatically corrected. Adams looked deeply into the well-springs of society, reducing all questions to that of the individual, to answer the problem of his age. He saw that if America aspired to her great promise, American individuals would necessarily have to live up to their individual promise.⁵²

All of this Adams sensed rather than consciously realized. Ferner Nuhn, in a provocative but otherwise questionable essay, notes the split in Adams' personality, producing an Adams who adhered to the "Law of the

⁵²Adams, Esther, passim; Adams, Democracy, passim; Adams, History, Vol. I & IX, passim; Mumford, Golden Day, Chapters I, III & V, passim; Brooks, Indian Summer, p. 199; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, November 25, 1877. See also the conclusion to Chapter II of this paper.

Fathers," and an alter ego that adhered to the "Love of the Mothers."⁵³ Nuhn's analysis, marked by small factual errors and misinterpretations, has the merit of pointing out a crucial aspect of Adams' personality. Adams always felt torn between the opposite poles of his nature embodied within the family tradition of worthy endeavor, on one side, and his effeminate love of beauty, luxury and the delights of a cultured social life on the other. Nuhn pointed out that Adams never escaped his consciousness of aristocratic birth and noble destiny. Adams' failure derived from an inability to adjust to a social milieu in which birth and wealth counted for little in the acquisition of fame.⁵⁴ Brooks noted this same aspect of Adams' character, but based his interpretation on Adams' overweening pride and his unceasing search for power.⁵⁵ Adams undoubtedly exhibited a dual personality, depending upon the circumstances under which he found himself. But the humanitarian urge developed from an early strength to an almost over-powering potential in later life.⁵⁶ At the same time, he persevered in his belief in his own noble birth and birthright, and reacted with revulsion when confronted with the lower and more miserable classes of mankind.⁵⁷ The dichotomy

⁵³Ferner Nuhn, "Henry Adams and the Hand of the Fathers," found in Literature in America: An Anthology of Literary Criticism, edited by Philip Rahv (New York: Meridan Books, 1960), pp. 247-267.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 273-275. Also see, Wister, Roosevelt, p. 148.

⁵⁶Letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, June 15, 1870. See also, Wister, Roosevelt, p. 152.

⁵⁷Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 12, 1873; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 31, 1874; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, November 21 (?), 1879; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 10, 1881; letter, Henry Adams to Robert Cunliffe, May 29, 1882; (this footnote continued on page 116)

seemingly observable between his thought and his actions stemmed from his inability to put into practice the theories he held valid. He knew that the more unfortunate could better themselves if given the opportunity, but he lacked the masculinity, endurance or inclination to become a martyr to any cause, as can be easily seen by looking to his political experiences.

Nuhn argued that Adams ultimately succumbed to the "Love of the Mothers," depending upon feeling and irrational reaction for guidance in life. It appears more correct to say that Adams superficially gave in to his inner impulses, but exercised his rational vigor, so much a part of the family tradition, in his efforts to bring about a revision of contemporary institutions and ways of thought. Lacking the intellectual stamina to fix himself upon a course of sacrifice, he compromised by allowing to the things of the earth their due consideration, while being true to his spiritual standards in his propensity toward reform and his concern for personal integrity. Although he remained a slave to his own preconceptions, he pointed to a time when a pervasive amelioration of conditions would become mandatory. Adams never spoke of immediate fulfillment of desired changes, but placed that occurrence somewhere within the first half of the twentieth century.⁵⁸ He knew that time and patience promised reality to his reforms, and he rested his faith in the slow but certain progress of a free people toward their mature potential. Uncon-

⁵⁷(Continued) letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Elizabeth Cameron, June 10, 1888; letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, October 28, 1888 (These letters indicate Adams' attitude toward the Chinese, Jews, Irish, "German-Jews," and the laborer.).

⁵⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 8, 1887.

sciously, at times consciously, he urged forward this movement, but frequently with some alien ostensible purpose in mind. As previously mentioned he postulated the need for a new social mind, a social mind compatible with contemporary conditions which laid the proper emphasis upon individual liberty and fulfillment.

CHAPTER IV

"KEEP THE FAITH"

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"KEEP THE FAITH"

Henry Adams has been resurrected as a symbol of the nineteenth century men and times. The recent interest in Adams derives largely from what he was, aside from what he did. Various interpretations of the Adams personality have been suggested, many contradictory, many downright hostile. Henry Steele Commager found that Adams was motivated by a pervasive and impersonal determinism which led him to revolt against the chaos of nineteenth century science. Adams, in this view, turned to the power and pity of the Catholic faith, with ". . . its safe, lovingly arranged and ordered universe, not too vast, though nobly spacious," as the faith was described by Willa Cather.¹ The search for unity and the need for security drove Adams to the acceptance of a credo that necessarily curtailed his wide ranging intellect, as Commager has it.

Charles Franklin Thwing, a close friend of Adams, agreed that Henry Adams was a deeply religious man. He noted that faith was to Adams as life is to the soul and the spirit. But, there is a crucial difference between faith and adherence to the Catholic religion. Thwing felt that Adams wished to awaken the world to the implications residing in social acceptance of a common faith, the possibilities for creativity under the inspiration of a strong religious faith shared by all members

¹Commager, American Mind, pp. 133, 139-140, 155.

of society. Adams assumed an attitude that Thwing has described as "Voltairean raillery" in order to stimulate thought.² Owen Wister, another close acquaintance of Adams, essentially agreed with Thwing's analysis.³ Both thought that Adams spoke usually in conversational jest aimed at inspiring thoughtful opposition.

Further opinions of Adams range from the respectful to the deprecating. Oscar Cargill said that Adams' every effort aborted because Adams lacked perseverance, and usually gave up to follow his more dominant interest in "social" life.⁴ "But in motive he was always a dilettante," affirmed the late Van Wyck Brooks. Brooks explained Adams on the basis of an extreme and overweening vanity. Writing amused Adams but hardly justified his existence. Brooks felt that Adams continually searched for power, in response to the family tradition.⁵ Jacob Levenson followed Brooks' thesis, with the modification that Adams was motivated by a deep faith in humanity which directed all of his actions. Levenson attributed Adams' failure of ever attaining Nirvana, and his rejection of Buddhism, to this abiding humanism.⁶

Perhaps the clearest and most acute interpretation of Adams was set forth by George Hochfield. Hochfield maintained that Adams conceived of the universe in terms of thought and action. The unity within the universe existed in the mind of an absolute creator. Man, a mere tool,

²Thwing, "Henry Adams," pp. 223-236.

³Wister, Roosevelt, pp. 147-150.

⁴Cargill, Intellectual America, p. 553.

⁵Brooks, Indian Summer, pp. 273-275.

⁶Levenson, Henry Adams, pp. 191-199, 220-234.

should submit to the necessities of life, as he simply could not renounce the world. However, man owed his major responsibility to himself, requiring that he keep his spiritual existence separate and uncompromised by contact with the material world. The only true happiness for man resulted from a union of his spirit with that omnipotent spirit of the universe. In this view, Adams' determinism included and received definite shape from the idea of a designing creator. One should contemplate the Absolute to ascertain the absolute laws of life. In this, as in all previously mentioned opinions, Adams emerged as a religious man, a mystic who adopted the scientific method as the Puritan Ramists of the seventeenth century had used it. Adams sought out the singular to prove the existence of the absolute and to demonstrate that design controlled the evolution of the earth.⁷

Any valid interpretation of Adams and his work must deal with Adams' purpose and justification for living, as developed by Adams in response to the challenge of life. Every indicator points to the conclusion that he had developed a lasting philosophy of life by 1891. In 1871, he wrote that the duty of a philosopher was to study the phenomena of mind and matter, and to ". . . reason about life, thought, the soul, and birth, as though he were reasoning about phosphates and square roots. . . ." The philosopher's pleasure was to work as though ". . . he were a small God and immortal and possibly omniscient."⁸ Adams worried about the problems of the ages, and in his reasoned approach, came to appreciate a credo emphasizing the individual and his relationship to society

⁷Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 87-94, 115-139.

⁸Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, April 18, 1871.

and the universe.

He wished many times that the questions could be avoided, that ". . . the mystery of Birth and the Grave were less important to us and more encouraging." Man could not exist as an animal; his own good required that he ". . . be bridled and saddled. . . His mind when it has no daily chopped food before it begins to eat itself, and to refuse to eat at all. . . ." ⁹ The questions could not be avoided if man wished to retain his human qualities, and Adams was especially impressed by this fact in 1876, when corruption and compromise of principle were so obvious to him. He spoke of going forth, ". . . bent with years and sorrows, to find in strife that repose which rest cannot give." ¹⁰ Adams was in deadly earnest when he penned those words, as he had recently resigned his post at Harvard, and set out to practice his reforms on society at large.

Adams felt that reform was possible, even after the debacle of 1876. He believed that man's struggle against the prejudices of fate might be "immoral" resistance, but merely surrendering and accepting the course of things with no sign of resistance rendered life unbearable. ¹¹ If man were to struggle against the prejudices of fate, he must have some chance of success. Adams indicated that man could control and regulate evolution so as to avoid the worst abuses. He stood directly in the

⁹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, February 9, 1876.

¹⁰Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, August 22, 1877.

¹¹Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, May 30, 1878; these comments were made in a description of the reactions of men and women respectively. It appears from this that Cargill's idea of Adams' "mariolatry" are perhaps far fetched. It seems highly possible that Adams' alleged worship of the woman was symptomatic of his interpretation of the twelfth century, and not to be taken seriously (See Cargill, Intellectual America, p. 569).

current of "reform" Darwinist thought. All of his efforts are best explained as attempts at reform, of some kind, and usually directed toward bringing about a better relationship between man and his environment.

Adams deduced a vital and dynamic concept of man, the universe and man's relationship to society and self. In 1883, he wrote that ". . . such a trifle as life . . . made . . . no impression on the mind."¹² By the time that Esther was published, in 1884, Adams had developed a philosophy of life adumbrating his activities throughout the remainder of his long life. In the novel, Esther is representative of both Adams and his wife. He painted a portrait of Marion Adams when he traced in the personality of Esther, but superimposed upon this portrait was Adams' own belief concerning man's duty and responsibility on earth. Adams arranged the scene at Niagara in order to present his message to the reader. Mr. George Strong pointed Esther's thought in the direction Adams himself had been thinking. Strong hoped that man might someday ". . . catch an abstract idea by the tail." Man should and would ". . . grow up to abstract truth." Each individual perceived a minute particle of the absolute spirit that pervaded the universe. Esther carried the thought to its conclusion with the supposition that ". . . the next world is a sort of great reservoir of truth, and . . . what is true in us just pours in it like raindrops. . . ."¹³ Adams expressed his faith in evolution and the perfectibility of man in this brief episode that is crucial to the meaning in Esther. Strong, the scientist, searched for the abstract truth in the universe, and Esther

¹²Letter, Henry Adams to Charles M. Gaskell, January 27, 1883.

¹³Adams, Esther, pp. 354-356.

felt its existence as a matter of faith. The seeming dichotomy between rational and empirical search for absolute truth and truth as an act of faith disappeared when Adams demonstrated that the scientist accepted all of his findings as proof of a preconceived thesis, the existence of an absolute discernable to man.

Adams was convinced that the individual was ill equipped to discover the abstract truths of existence, and would not understand them even if he could. He saw that the opposite could be proven of all man's posited "truths."¹⁴ His concern was that man should accept the existence of an absolute and guide his conduct accordingly. If an understandable morality was to be instituted among men, it must be in terms applicable to all men, implying that an absolute standard by which to judge did in fact exist. Adams exerted himself in the hope that he could force men to ponder these questions, believing that to reason about the mysteries of birth, life and death would lead to the conclusion that the absolute existed and that a standard of morality was incumbent upon all reasonable beings, unless they shed their higher qualities and degenerate into mere beasts.

From the conclusions suggested above, it appears that Adams amplified and extended his thesis in later years. Hochfield, in his careful analysis, stated that Adams used art, specifically the art of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, to provide an indication of the capacity and creativity that attended the unification of society behind a common ideal.¹⁵ He did not mean to be scientifically accurate in his

¹⁴Letter, Henry Adams to Mrs. Elizabeth Cameron, July 29, 1888.

¹⁵Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 100-114.

characterizations of the medieval period, as was evidenced by his refusal to recognize the findings of the French medievalists of the early twentieth century.¹⁶ Basically, he aimed to illustrate the theories first set forth in Esther. He attempted to point out the unity in existence, and the identity of each individual within that unity. Otherwise, all was chaos. To the thirteenth century, the unity inhered in the adoration of the Virgin, actually nothing more than a symbol for the absolute force of the centuries. Perhaps it was the Virgin, perhaps the Son. The label men applied mattered little, so long as they recognized its existence. The existence of a spiritual absolute allowed the acceptance of a unity in humanity, in God, in the Virgin, in the Dynamo. Once accept a unity and the opportunity for creativity multiplied, as the artist -- and every man possessed an art inherently -- no longer created through himself, but through his shared existence within the unity of the universe wherein he obtained his individuality.¹⁷

It appears that Adams did not doubt that men would ultimately reach the conclusion he advocated. He did not really think that human nature had degenerated to the extent that man was no longer able to cope with modern abstractions. The task of understanding the advanced speculations of science bore down almost crushingly, but Adams felt the human intellect capable of meeting the challenge, even though ". . . it would need to jump."¹⁸ When Owen Wister, in 1912, expressed his conviction

¹⁶Mrs. Winthrop Chanler, Roman Spring, as quoted in Brooks, Indian Summer, p. 487.

¹⁷Adams, Chartres, passim; Adams, Education, passim.

¹⁸Adams, Education, p. 498.

that progress in the United States would continue, Adams, after exerting his strongest efforts to dissuade him, dropped his pose for a moment, and almost gratefully urged Wister to "Keep the faith." It seems certain that Adams' life and work had been dedicated unswervingly to this end.¹⁹

¹⁹Wister, Roosevelt, p. 152; Hochfield, Henry Adams, pp. 100-114.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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I. Documents and Published Letters

Microfilms of the Adams Papers Owned by the Adams Manuscript Trust and Deposited in the Massachusetts Historical Society. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1954. This microfilm can be found in the Montana State University Library under the file number 24. The collection includes letters written by Henry Adams during the years 1858-1889. The student must supplement these original documents by using published letters. Harvard College has a large group of Adams letters that have been published only in part.

Cater, Harold Dean, compiler, Henry Adams and His Friends: A Collection of his Unpublished Letters. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947. Cater purports to publish in their entirety many letters that had been used previously only in part. Some letters are found here that are unavailable elsewhere. Cater's introduction has the distinction of being brief and complete, besides being based upon the personal recollections of many of the people who knew Adams.

Ford, Worthington Chauncey, editor, A Cycle of Adams Letters, 1861-1865. Two Volumes. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920. This is a two volume publication, with both volumes lacking direct bearing for the purposes of this study. Ford was an intimate acquaintance of Henry Adams, and has exercised considerable skill in selecting the letters so that the emerging personality of Henry Adams assumes form.

_____, editor, Letters of Henry Adams, 1858-1891. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1930. Ford demonstrated good skill and sound judgment in his selection of letters, as Adams' emerging personality becomes clear to the reader. This is the most complete set of Adams letters in existence, when used in conjunction with the second volume covering the years 1891-1918 (See the next listing).

_____, editor, Letters of Henry Adams, (1891-1918). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1938. This is the second volume of the Ford letters listed above.

II. Works by Henry Adams That Were Used in This Study

Adams, Brooks, editor, The Degradation of Democratic Dogma. New York: Macmillan Company, 1919. Included in this book of essays can be found Henry Adams' "Letter to American Teachers," the "Rule of Phase," and the "Tendency of History." Brooks wrote an introduction of some

length in which he expressed his impression of his brother's life and thought. This book, in its entirety, is essential to one wishing to understand Henry Adams and his thought.

Adams, Charles Francis, Junior, and Henry Adams, Chapters of Erie. Ithaca: Great Seal Books, 1956, pp. 101-136. This volume, edited by Robert H. Elias, contains a re-publication of the essays written by the two Adamses concerning the abuses involved in the railroad speculation and financial manipulation of the eighteen sixties and early seventies. The article by Henry Adams was entitled "The New York Gold Conspiracy," and can be found on pages 101 to 136. Charles F. Adams, Jr., wrote the other essays, with some assistance.

Adams, Henry, Democracy and Esther: Two Novels by Henry Adams. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1961. Ernest Samuels edited this re-publication of Adams' novels. In the introduction he wrote for the volume, Samuels claimed that the novels were classics, and there is some justification for the statement. (See above, Chapter II).

_____, editor, Documents Relating to New England Federalism, 1800-1815. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1905. Adams collected documents revealing the degeneration of Federalism during the Jeffersonian era. He concluded that most Federalists refused outright treason in their machinations to oust Republicanism. He used the documents to demonstrate that Federalists generally accepted the positions previously considered Republican when Federalism had ruled the nation.

_____, The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography. Sentry Edition. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1961. Adams wrote the Education not as an autobiography, but as a companion to his Chartres. The two books represent Adams' comparison of the effects of religious unity and of scientific multiplicity. Adams' intent, although multifarious in implication, was to point up the effect upon modern society of the lack of a shared tradition and faith. Impressed by the vast changes that had transformed the world, Adams wrote of his own struggle to find meaning and value in life. One should note that although he labeled himself a failure, everyone else in the world was seen as worse than mere failure.

_____, editor, Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1905. This group of essays was produced by Adams and his doctoral candidates of 1876. Adams emulated the method of those historians adhering to the "germ theory" of history, and felt that he and his associates had successfully traced the development of English law from its Germanic sources. Adams wrote the introductory essay, and proof read the others.

_____, The History of the United States of America During the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Nine Volumes (variously titled). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909 (Vols. VII-IX, 1911). Adams launched an investigation of early Liberalism

to ascertain where America had gone astray. He hoped to discover the way back, and he also aimed to correct many misleading assumptions concerning American history. He constructed a rather sorry portrait of the attempts of the Jeffersonians to solve national problems. The evils inherent in the national situation were compounded by foreign intervention and, ultimately, war. Adams expressed sympathy for Jeffersonian goals, but felt that too little allowance had been accorded to the weaknesses of human nature in formulating these objectives. For a discussion, see the pertinent parts of the chapter above entitled "History is a Tangled Skein." For a revealing comparison, see the works of Irving Brant listed below.

, John Randolph, of The American Statesmen Series, edited by John T. Morse. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1894. Adams expressed a very hostile opinion of Randolph, condemning him for lack of consistency, coherency and rationality. Adams stated that Randolph continually acted from an ambition for power and a desire for revenge. He pointed to an inconsequential event of 1789 to show why Randolph hated the Adamses. He felt that Randolph's only contribution to Jeffersonian thought came when the latter linked the cause of states rights with that of slavery, a retrogression at best in Adams' eyes. He heaped abuse upon Randolph for following a strictly party line during the years 1800-1805, but condemned him for becoming an independent in later years. Adams selected his evidence well to convey the impression that Randolph was nothing if not an insane man. According to Adams, Randolph was completely mad by 1828, yet Kirk proved that Randolph was capable of brilliant and effective debate in the subsequent Virginia Constitutional Convention. The similarity between Adams and Randolph is remarkable, and one suspects that Adams may have hated Randolph and Woodrow Wilson for the same reasons. Kirk quoted Randolph extensively -- offering nothing but praise for Randolph's writing -- and many of the sayings attributed to Randolph were uttered by Adams at a much later date. For an intriguing comparison, read Adams and Kirk at the same sitting.

, Mont-Saint Michel and Chartres. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1959. Adams investigated the art and philosophy of the twelfth through the fourteenth centuries to point up the possibilities for accomplishment in society when a common and vigorous faith is dominant. He used a three-fold literary device to attract and hold the reader. First, there is the impression of travel through distance, secondly through time, and finally in spirit until the reader becomes convinced that he knows the events and feeling of that period of time as though it were a part of his personal experience. This was essentially Adams' technique in all of his efforts at writing history. In the words of John Herman Randall, Jr., Adams attempted to write history from "the inside out."

, The Life of Albert Gallatin. Reprint Edition. New York: Peter Smith, 1943. Adams chose to use the documents to relate the biography of the man and the nation. He was overly friendly toward Gallatin, almost to the extent of hero worship. He developed as his theme that

the Jeffersonians were unsuccessful largely because they failed to apply their theories. The rule of principle soon degenerated into the rule of interest and faction. Circumstances rather than adherence to principle decided the course of action in any given example. Gallatin embodied the very traits that Adams himself so assiduously cultivated. The Jeffersonian called for currency, civil service and tariff reforms, as did his later counterpart. He reduced the social problems to one deriving from a lack of moral uprightness within society, as did Henry Adams in the late nineteenth century. In fact, when Adams described Gallatin, the reader can see the basis for the characteristics given to Nathan Gore and George Strong in Democracy. But, Adams found that the principles of Republicanism which had been built up in opposition to Federalism were soon destroyed when the Republicans assumed power. At that time, a general shift had taken place, with the Republicans accepting Federalism under a new name, and the Federalists becoming the followers and proclaimers of traditional Republican principles. Adams was not as definite in this study as he was in the History, but the reader notes the emergence of a theme pervasive and lasting,

_____, editor, The Writings of Albert Gallatin. Three Volumes. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Company, 1879. Adams published here the complete sources for his biography of Gallatin. He used this volume as a reference work for his History.

Hochfield, George, editor, The Great Secession Winter of 1860-1861 and Other Essays by Henry Adams. New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, Incorporated, 1963. This book contains most of the essays written by Henry Adams after he reached maturity. His "Session" articles, "Gold Conspiracy," "Harvard College," "Primitive Rights of Women," "The 'Independents' in the Canvass," and others are printed here under one cover. Hochfield inserted an excellent introduction to the complete volume and to each essay.

III. Secondary Sources Dealing With the Life and Work of Henry Adams

Adams, James Truslow, The Adams Family. New York: The Literary Guild, 1930. Adams dealt with the family and the pervasive influence of family traditions.

_____, Henry Adams. New York: A. and C. Boni, Incorporated, 1933. Quite general and superficial, this book serves only to introduce the subject. It appears too quickly and lightly done to be of much use as a reference source.

Donovan, Timothy Paul, Henry Adams and Brooks Adams: The Education of Two American Historians. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961. Donovan offers little that is new in his study of the two Adamses. His characterizations are traditional, his evidence usual, and his discussion of historiography merits less attention than the work done by William Jordy on the same topic. Donovan's

best work consists of his discussion of a pervasive family heritage. His is at least as good or better than J. T. Adams' attempt at the same thing.

Hochfield, George, Henry Adams, an Introduction and an Interpretation, of the American Authors and Critics Series, edited by John Mahoney and Foster Provost. New York: Barnes and Noble, Incorporated, 1962. Hochfield has perhaps the most definitive of the works dealing with the work and thought of Henry Adams. Apparently Hochfield believes Adams to be one of the great literary figures in American history, as he praised nearly everything that Adams produced. He saw Adams' basic theme as the degradation of democracy in America. He emphasized Adams' morbid preoccupation with failure, declaring that Adams blamed the failure upon man rather than system. Hochfield was especially sound in respect to the moral considerations that guided Adams' every action. It should be remembered that Hochfield agreed with Adams, hence his analysis was at times colored, as when he discussed Adams' treatment of Randolph and the Jeffersonians in general.

Hume, Robert A., Runaway Star: An Appreciation of Henry Adams. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1951. This book is simply the claim of the title, an appreciation. In fact, Hume was overly appreciative and failed to point out Adams' deficiencies. He wandered through a general review of Adams' life and works, marking the significant events and themes, to arrive at a conclusion striking in its implications. "Henry Adams . . . had a distinctly contemporary mind and could not completely re-erect the collapsing metaphysical structure of the past, dwell in it contentedly, and assume God and unity. So his predicament, and so his meaning. He could wish for unity and search for it and then, not finding it, strive to create it in terms congenial to the twentieth century." (p. 237) "His last comment on the unsolved puzzle of reality and man's share in it was an emotional outcry of appalled but undefeated anger . . . [p. 237] . . . of endurance beyond defeat, and of the only kind of triumph in which one can now readily believe: that of the affirmed invincibility of the human spirit in the face of what must overwhelm it." (p. 238). Over-appreciative as he was, Hume caught the spirit of Henry Adams.

Hutchinson, William T., editor, The Marcus Jernegan Essays in American Historiography. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937. In this group of essays on various historians and on the evolving trends in American historiography, one finds much of the background material necessary to a study of American history as a discipline. The essay on Adams was written by Henry Steele Commager (Chapter X). Commager decided that Adams was more important for what he was than for what he did, as he gave material form to the idea of the "lost American." Commager placed Adams among the emerging "scientific" historians in contradistinction to the "literary" historians of the past.

Jordy, William H., Henry Adams: Scientific Historian. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952. Jordy emphasized excessively the scientific

aspects of Adams' history. He portrayed Adams as a direct intellectual descendant of Mill and Comte. In a comparison between Adams and Parkman, Jordy was forced to admit that Parkman was more "scientific" than Adams. This seems to leave his analysis hanging in mid-air. However, Jordy demonstrated good command of the scientific concepts of the time. His background material is for the most part excellent, but his work was impaired by his refusal to recognize what he admitted, that Adams did not take science as seriously as he would have the world believe.

Kraus, Michael, A History of American History. New York: Farrar and Rinehart, Incorporated, 1937. Again one finds a competent review of the prominent historians and trends in American historiography. Adams is treated on pages 321-335.

Levenson, Jacob C., The Mind and Art of Henry Adams. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1957. This is a very readable book, with the interpretative positions seemingly voiced first by the late Van Wyck Brooks. Levenson described Adams as the artist-historian. His conception was of a developing Adams, from amateur, to scholar, to artist-historian. He claimed Chartres as Adams' masterpiece, a practice in cultural history. He gave Adams credit for realizing that history possessed inherent limitations, and for going beyond history into the production of art for its own sake. Basically, Levenson said that Adams postulated the need for a new social mind, an interpretation set forth by Ralph Gabriel at an earlier date (See the listing below). Levenson's major premise is sound, but the emphasis on Adams' art is overdrawn. Levenson was more analytical than Hume, and was not so easily swayed by Adams' work. He developed a "feel" for Adams, but went too far, though not to the excess Hume did. Although Levenson followed Brooks, he omitted to mention the defects in Adams that were so apparent to Brooks. Levenson even managed to apologize for and excuse Adams' anti-Semitism. Still the book represents one of the better interpretations of Adams and his work. A better perspective in biography can only be found in the extensive Samuels studies.

Miller, Richard Felix, "Henry Adams as Reformer With an Adams Bibliography." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Washington, 1947. In a superficial work that did not even approach the topic suggested by the title, Miller emphasized Adams the editor. He struggled valiantly to discover just how many articles Adams wrote while acting as editor for the North American Review. However, he failed to use all the available sources, and his bibliography was out of date by the time he submitted it.

Samuels, Ernest, The Young Henry Adams. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948. Samuels has the most extensive treatment of Henry Adams, but the philosophical quality of his work is inferior to that of George Hochfield, Max Baym and, perhaps, Jacob Levenson. Samuels deserves meritorious notice for his exhaustive and penetrating study, however. He found Adams convinced that American society would progress, but said that Adams tempered his belief after the manner of

Gibbon and Macaulay. Adams' later theories were all adumbrated in the History, as Samuels has it. Most critics have found that the Education and Chartres form but a continuation of the theme first set down in Gallatin. Adams developed his theme around the conviction that "... the remedy for the abuse of economic power lay in private morality," in Samuels' words. This was essentially a religious conviction, as man could only reform himself from within. Thus Adams warred against a system that seemed to corrupt rather than allow man to reform himself and society. The power of human urgings toward right action were simply unequal to modern demands. Some unifying and strengthening force had to be placed at man's disposal. Samuels asserted that Adams meant to create this force by promoting a social awareness within society at large. Samuels has a second volume completed at this time, The Middle Years, and is immersed in the production of a third.

Stevenson, Elizabeth, Henry Adams: A Biography. New York: Macmillan Company, 1956. Stevenson's work is useful mainly to indicate where Adams was and what he was doing at any particular moment. Philosophically, she lacked depth and insight. The research behind the book seems to have been aimed at producing a chronological and locational description of Adams' experience. The tone of the work is a bit too romantic for the subject matter.

Wister, Owen, Roosevelt, The Story of a Friendship: 1880-1919. New York: Macmillan Company, 1930. Wister related the story of his friendship with Theodore Roosevelt, but also used the opportunity to discuss other figures of the time. His is a very intimate account of the social atmosphere during the Roosevelt era. An excellent interpretation of Adams and his life can be found on pages 147-152. Wister was one of the select few to receive an original copy of the Education when it was privately printed in 1907. His personal characterizations are much better than his interpretations of works. For instance, he said that a portrait of Adams could only have been painted by El Greco, if the personal subtleties were to be shown, as no other painter has been able to match the Greek's ability to catch the spirit of his subjects. Wister spoke of the Voltairean raillery in Adams, as did Thwing and Thayer, both intimates of Adams.

IV. Secondary Sources Dealing With the Late Nineteenth Century and the Important Figures of the Era, or That Are Illustrative of the Work Being Produced at the Time

Anderson, Sherwood, "I Want to Know Why," found in A Book of Modern Short Stories, edited by Dorothy Brewster. Reprinted Edition. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935. Miss Brewster offered a group of well selected stories indicative of the "naturalistic" approach to literature. The story by Anderson, "I Want to Know Why," is exceptional in this respect. Working with mere daily commonplaces, Anderson effectively constructed a dramatic episode where none seemed to exist. One finds also the moral lesson that is supposedly of no concern to an author of the naturalist school.

Blum, John Morton, The Republican Roosevelt. Reprint Edition. New York: Antheneum, 1962. This essay basically deals with Roosevelt and his attitudes, but is of use to one wishing to understand the nineteenth century liberal aristocrat. The relationship between Adams and Roosevelt was close, and Blum took occasion to point out the lessons that Roosevelt learned from Adams. This is perhaps the best interpretive treatment of Roosevelt. Blum was sympathetic toward Roosevelt, yet maintained his pose as an impartial critic. Roosevelt emerges as a professional politician pursuing power, much as Adams did, but with more success. One notes that same moral obsession in both men. Blum emphasized the conservatism in this "liberal" Progressive, and the same attribute was a part of the Adams make-up.

Brant, Irving, James Madison. Volumes IV, V and VI (variously subtitled). New York: Pobbis-Merrill Company, Incorporated, (IV) 1953- (V) 1950- (VI) 1961. Brant and Adams covered the same period of history, but with different purposes. Brant's work is excellent for a comparative review of the approaches of the two men. Brant took advantage of several opportunities to point out Adams' errors, maintaining that Adams seemed to misinterpret deliberately at times. In Brant's opinion, Adams started the trend in American historiography that culminated in the maligning of James Madison. Brant, to the contrary, felt that Madison was an accomplished and successful statesman and that he was the real force behind Republicanism. In his analysis, Brant portrayed Madison as a principled politician, but one who was practical and ready to adjust to contemporary circumstances. On just these grounds Adams condemned Madison but failed to appreciate the firmness of conviction in Madison. Brant indicated his sympathy for Madison, but his interpretation seems sounder than that of Adams. Adams expended too much effort in bemoaning the fate of the nation after the apostasy of the Jeffersonians. Brant lacked the stylistic excellence of Adams, but he was much more impartial. He was also much more thorough in his research, although some of the material may have been inaccessible to Adams.

Brooks, Van Wyck, New England: Indian Summer, 1865-1915. n.p.: E. P. Dutton and Company, Incorporated, 1940. Brooks projected this volume as a sequel to his Flowering of New England and his intent was to characterize that brilliant yet gloomy mood of late nineteenth century New England, in contrast to the zest and fire of the past. The tone of the later era lacked the radiant exuberance and enthusiasm so notable in the age of Thoreau, Emerson and Whitman. Brooks did admirable work, ranging through the figures of the period, rather arbitrarily assigning this or that litterateur to New England when he could just as well have been assigned to any other section of the country. He concluded that in Henry Adams, New England came full circle, from the seeming gloom of the Puritan beginning to that pessimistic fatalism of the fourth generation of Adamases. He noted the contrast between John Adams and his great-grandson, and verified his thesis. But, he also admitted that in William James, New England received a new spark of life taking a different emphasis, still not so different from the meaning in Emerson. He did not see Adams as calling a new credo into existence,

albeit unconsciously at times. Brooks characterized Adams as a "dillatante," always motivated by overweening ambition and love of power.

Cargill, Oscar, Intellectual America: Ideas on the March. New York: Macmillan Company, 1941. Cargill discussed naturalism in definitive terms, although his characterizations are sometimes objectionable. Still his attempt is one of the most exhaustive in a single volume study. He traced the American movement with its French and English origins, and followed its growth up through James T. Farrell. However, he placed Adams among the Freudians rather than among the naturalists, as a separate category. Even considering Cargill's evidence, it appears that the classification is not entirely justifiable. Cargill was quite hostile toward Adams, declaring that Adams failed consistently because he lacked the masculinity to stick to anything, always giving in to his effeminate love for a cultured "social life." The whole book is pertinent to any study of the late nineteenth century, with Chapters I, II, V and VI assuming importance for the purposes of this study.

Carmichael, Oliver C., Universities: Commonwealth and American, A Comparative Study. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1959. Essentially a study of contemporary higher education, this work offers benefit to the student of the nineteenth century by presenting a considerable amount of historical background in the form of a statistical analysis.

Commager, Henry Steele, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1962. Commager developed a stimulating interpretive account of American thought and character, emphasizing the Puritan element persevering in the American experience. He included historians, literary figures, religious divines, philosophers and the common man in setting forth his feeling about the American promise. Commager placed Adams in the Catholic Church, and indicated that he was more important for what he was than for what he did. He was too quick to generalize, too ready to solve problems, but given the aim of his efforts, he did well what he set out to do. The student of the late nineteenth century can ill afford to neglect Commager's provocative study.

Crane, Stephen, "The Open Boat," found in A Book of Modern Short Stories, edited by Dorothy Brewster. Reprinted Edition. New York: Macmillan Company, 1935. Crane, perhaps the earliest American literary naturalist, set the tone for naturalism in this short story. It is quite excellent, and especially noteworthy is the analogy of the windmill to Nature. One obtains the essential "feel" of naturalism from a perusal of this brief tale. Further reading in Crane should include the stories entitled "The Blue Hotel" and "The Monster."

Curti, Merle, The Social Ideas of American Educators. Revised Edition. Paterson, New Jersey: Pageant Books, Incorporated, 1959. Curti neglected an interpretive account in favor of merely chronicling

the events. The book is dull and uninteresting, although the subject could be quite attractive. The tendency of Curti to be pedantic and heavy makes the account unrewarding, except for the acquisition of basic facts. Curti concerned himself with public education rather than higher learning.

Dreiser, Theodore, An American Tragedy. Special Edition. New York and Cleveland: World Publishing Company, 1948. Although this book was not published until 1925, it is one of the finest examples of the naturalist approach in literature. In an introduction to this volume, H. L. Mencken called Dreiser the "Father" of literary naturalism in America.

_____, The Financier. Revised Edition. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927. This is another exercise in literary naturalism using the author's research into the lives of Jay Gould and Jay Cooke.

_____, The Genius. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926. In this novel, Dreiser used a very autobiographical tone. Especially noteworthy are his questions concerning the social arrangements for reproduction of the specie and his review of the religious doctrines of Mrs. Eddy, current in his time. This book was banned through the efforts of Anthony Comstock and other such reformers. Merton S. Yewdale, in an introduction specially prepared for this volume, defended Dreiser's work, and by extension, that of the whole naturalist school in literature.

Duberman, Martin B., Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1960. In his treatment of C. F. Adams, Duberman adhered to the theory that Adams was an uninteresting but honorable man, "true to himself." Adams was important for the people he knew and the events of which he was part. While presenting the definitive biography of Adams, Duberman covered the events of the period in detail. His work is especially good on the politics of the late nineteenth century. He insisted that Adams wanted no political office because of the moral results. It seems more appropriate to say that C. F. Adams wanted office on the same terms that John Quincy and Henry wanted it.

Earnest, Ernest, Academic Procession: An Informal History of The American College, 1636-1953. New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Incorporated, 1953. Earnest, in an informal and interesting fashion, presented a critical examination of developments in higher education in America. One finds the emphasis placed on trends, not facts, with an episodic treatment illustrating each point.

Fuess, Claude Moore, Carl Schurz, Reformer (1829-1906). New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1932. Fuess has written the only definitive biography of Carl Schurz. He was quite sympathetic toward his subject, hence the book reads like a poetic eulogy, still the significant events are covered in a readable fashion. Especially well-done is Fuess' description of the Liberal Republican movement of the late nineteenth century, although one suspects that Schurz is given excess

credit as a leader. But after looking into other sources, one finds that it is indeed difficult to over-emphasize the part played by Schurz in that political movement. He provided the leadership for those motivated by the urge to reform the country. Fuess viewed the whole reform movement as a determined effort to maintain and uphold in public office private standards of a high quality. According to this interpretation there was little of the "holier than thou" attitude involved in the reform credo. The reformers were a cultured and educated class, perhaps reacting to what Hofstadter has since termed the "status revolution." Fuess pointed out that the reformers were in large part visionary, refusing to recognize the exigencies of practical politics and thereby frustrating their desired goals. Fuess seems to have been in sympathy with their goals, but felt, with Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt, that one nullified his chances of accomplishing anything concrete when he withdrew from party membership. The organization was necessary.

Gabriel, Ralph Henry, The Course of American Democratic Thought. Second Edition. New York: Ronald Press Company, 1956. This is the best one volume review of the intellectual history of the United States. Gabriel was balanced, generous and critically interpretive in his treatment of the important figures of American history. Each period of the national history is analyzed and synthesized into the emergent whole of Gabriel's thesis concerning the evolution of "American democratic thought." Especially apropos to this study were the sections on Henry Adams, naturalism, the emergent social scientists and the effects of Darwinian theory upon American thought. He found Adams neither optimistic nor pessimistic. According to Gabriel, Adams merely postulated the need for a new "social mind," a mind compatible with scientific advance and social change. The discussion of Henry Adams is found on pages 315-333 of this edition.

Goldman, Eric F., Rendezvous With Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform. Revised Edition. New York: Vintage Books, 1962. Goldman presents excellent coverage of the Liberal Republican movement of the late nineteenth century, more expressive and theoretical than that of Claude Fuess (see above). Goldman successfully postulated that nineteenth century Liberalism failed because it lacked appeal for the lower and laboring classes. When it finally became effective, in the twentieth century, it had been transformed into an industrial pressure group. Goldman linked the Liberal Republicanism of the early reformers to the agrarian movements such as Populism and the Alliances. His characterization was of an attempt to impose reform from the "top down," until Populism reversed the order, a trend that carried over into the Progressive era. Goldman agreed with Hofstadter on the "status revolution," and developed his thesis accordingly. However, he concerned himself more with the intellectual than the common man, in contrast to Hofstadter's emphasis (See the listing below for Hofstadter).

Handlin, Oscar, "History of American History," found in The Harvard Guide to American History, edited by Oscar Handlin et al. Cambridge:

The Belknap Press, 1960. This volume contains the best bibliography of the full sweep of American history. Handlin, et al., experts in their various fields, have prepared listings for the divergent areas of American history, and discussed trends and tendencies in American historiography. The discussion of "The History of American History," by Oscar Handlin, is both authoritative and complete despite its brevity. The volume is an essential to any serious student of American history.

Hartz, Louis, The Liberal Tradition in America. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955. In a stimulating and penetrating analysis, Hartz found that American politics were anti-theoretical and essentially conservative. Although he claimed that the United States lacked the historical background necessary to the development of a truly conservative or liberal tradition, he also stated that Americans had always been liberal, and were conservative in that they attempted to adhere rigidly to this traditional and somewhat outdated liberalism. The only real conservatism that America experienced presented itself in the slave-holding South, and was crushed out in a fraternal conflict. Hartz said that the elementary "Whiggery" of Hamilton formed the basis for American political beliefs. This work lends definition to the politics of the nineteenth century, but the author's intent must be kept in mind.

Hofstadter, Richard, The Age of Reform, From Bryan to F. D. R. New York: Vintage Books, 1955. Hofstadter has here a review of the political ferment in the United States from the era of the Populists to the New Deal. He was overly harsh on the agrarian interests, stating that their claims were for the most part unfounded. However, Hofstadter affirmed that he did not write with malice, but to coerce these interests into a more coherent and defensible credo. He found that America's basic political problems stemmed from an uninformedness and simple ignorance among the liberal forces, and the almost non-existence of any effective conservative opposition. Conveying nicely the position of the farmer and the laborer during the late nineteenth century, Hofstadter tied Populist to Progressive, and then to New Dealer, by using the "status revolution" hypothesis. He argued well, but one is impressed by the polemic quality of this book. This attribute does not detract from the value of the study.

_____, The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959. Hofstadter analyzed the thought and career of each of the leading figures credited with having contributed to the American political tradition. From the first article on the Fathers to that discussing F. D. R., each point is made easily and comprehensively. Hofstadter held that an American conservatism dominated American politics.

_____, and C. DeWitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States. Third Edition. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958. This book does exactly what the title purports, and does it well.

_____, Social Darwinism in American Thought: 1860-1915. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945. For a definitive treatment of the Darwinist thinkers, one need not attempt to find another book. Hofstadter ably demonstrated the rise and acceptance of Darwinism, its ramifications, and its subsequent decline. His discussions of W. G. Sumner, Lester F. Ward, and Brooks Adams are especially good. He stated that Darwinism was accepted by the opening of the early eighteen seventies, and began to fail immediately thereafter. Hofstadter borrowed much from Ralph Gabriel (see listing above) but he added significantly to the material he made use of in his study. According to Hofstadter, the emerging social scientists over-threw Social Darwinism in favor of "reform" Darwinism.

Josephson, Matthew, The Robber Barons. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Incorporated, 1962. Josephson presented a very interesting though somewhat biased account of the emergence of the "captains of industry." The fact that he dedicated the work to the Beards throws some light upon the theme of the book. The author did well when dealing with individuals, but was at best fair when he attempted to synthesize. His account of labor movements, quite incomplete, was fallacious on many points. Again, however, his comments on the political events of the late nineteenth century were penetrating and vital. He was quite hostile toward the characters he discussed, but his work displayed acute insight and sharp detail. He declared that politics was a game until such events as the Haymarket Affair and the Homestead Strike aroused a previously lethargic public opinion. Then it became mandatory that politicians concern themselves with issues again. From this latter phenomenon derived Populism and Progressivism.

Kirk, Russell, Randolph of Roanoke: A Study in Conservative Thought. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951. For a comparison with Adams' Randolph, Kirk is excellent. He was as friendly toward Randolph as Adams was hostile. Kirk looked to Randolph as the first and most consistent disciple of Edmund Burke in America. He found cogency and coherency in Randolph's thought, declaring that he was thoroughly consistent from 1800 -- and possibly before -- until the time of his death. Kirk explained much of the erraticness in Randolph, and set up the Virginian as the great American Conservative, the teacher of Calhoun -- as did Adams also -- and the model for present-day states righters. He admitted that Randolph was always bothered by disease and debauchery, but held that this weakness had little effect upon Randolph's politics. Randolph was a severe critic of contemporary life, idyllizing the old Virginia plantation life. He criticized men, measures and government, adhering strictly to the old Republican doctrines of John Taylor, the original Jeffersonian, and Patrick Henry. He expressed contempt for the contemporary worship of the "god Whirl." Irving Brant has suggested that Randolph's maladjustment derived from his sexual deficiencies -- his sexual organs never developed fully, a fact he was forced to reveal to his prospective bride who threw him over after the revelation. Neither Adams nor Kirk mention this subject in their discussions of

Randolph, perhaps because they were unaware of it, but it seems that Brant has a more complete explanation for Randolph's behavior than either of the other two.

Kirkland, Edward C., Industry Comes of Age: Business, Labor and Public Policy, 1860-1897, Volume IV of The Economic History of the United States, edited by Henry David, et al. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961. This is the standard on the economic developments during the last half of the nineteenth century, except for agriculture, which was covered by Fred Shannon (see listing below). Kirkland followed the theoretical postulates of Joseph Schumpeter concerning the "business cycle."

London, Jack, Best Short Stories of Jack London. Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1945. In this volume can be found a representative group of stories by London, demonstrating his tendencies toward naturalism.

_____, The Sea-Wolf. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1904. In this novel, London expressed his ideas concerning the "superman" in a naturalistic framework. The sea and its immutable strength compares with the "whirlpool of wheat" in Norris' work and the working of circumstances in Dreiser's.

Martin, Frederick Townsend, The Passing of the Idle Rich. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1911. Martin wrote after the example of Thorstein Veblen, condemning the new and the old rich for their refusal to become a productive part of the community. He declared that American tradition, as an influential force, had disappeared when the frontier came to an end and when modern industrialism emerged into full potential. He accused the industrialists of taking their cue from the underworld in their ostentatious display of wealth. He postulated that the possession of gold corrupted the possessor, and that life lost its meaning when an excess of gold imposed idleness. He remained firm in his belief that members of the elite -- "Society" -- were the best leaders for the American people, but that a re-orientation was necessary. He professed to write as a prophet and as an instigator to action, affirming that revolution impended if the worker remained subject to the exploitation under which he currently suffered. He compared himself to the Southern prophet of doom, Hinton R. Helper, and beseeched readers to receive his warnings more attentively than the South heeded Helper. This man compares favorably with Henry Adams, both in terms of class consciousness and reform. The comparison extends further to the similarity of background, experience and attitude. The only contrast is that Martin was a member of the group he condemned, whereas Adams was not.

Norris, Frank, McTeague, A Story of San Francisco. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Incorporated, 1928. For an illustration of the working out of the naturalist theme, this novel provides well, besides boasting an interesting plot. Norris wrote the book during the eighteen nineties, and it was published after the turn of the century. Dreiser has named Norris the "Father" of literary naturalism in America.

_____, The Pit, A Story of Chicago. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Incorporated, 1928. The symbolism in Norris is especially clear in this novel. The theme is a shortened version of what appears in The Octopus, a later work by Norris. Robert Spiller has compared Norris' symbolic use of wheat to Adams' use of science, and with excellent results, it should be added. The symbolism might have been unconscious on Adams' part, but not so with Norris.

_____, Vandover and the Brute. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company, Incorporated, 1928. This novel was published posthumously by Norris' brother, and represents a different side of Norris. Essentially naturalistic, still the theme foreshadowed the work of the somewhat later "irrational" school of literature in its psychological overtones. Norris wrote this during the nineties also, but he did not develop the technique that others such as Sherwood Anderson did. Some critics have argued that he would have been the founder of a new school had his life not been extinguished so suddenly.

Persons, Stow, American Minds: A History of Ideas. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958. Persons projected a significant and definitive study of ideas, but his conclusions were too quick, too easy. In his attempt at popularization, he over-simplified the ideas he discussed and tended to categorize without enough justification. As an introduction, the book serves good purpose, but for research the student would be on safer ground with Gabriel, Commager, Hofstadter, Goldman, Hartz and Herbert Schneider (see listings above and below). Persons' best efforts went into his discussion of naturalism, and even this is over-drawn and misleading.

Porter, Noah, The Human Intellect; With an Introduction Upon Psychology and the Soul. Fourth Edition. New York: Scribner, Armstrong and Company, 1873. This book was intended as a college text for use in psychology and theology courses. Porter, long-time president of Yale, demonstrated the concern for science and method that pervaded the late nineteenth century, even extending to the theologians. Porter, essentially a Scottish "realist," accepted the theory of evolution, but modified it with an alternate theory postulating design in the Universe. In his theory of "adaptation," Porter found a way to accept evolution and still adhere to his religious convictions. He professed to use the inductive method, but, at the same time, said that induction was the hand-maiden of deduction. Written in a heavy, pedantic style, this book is informative to the student attempting to get the "feel" of the intellectual tone of the late nineteenth century.

Schneider, Herbert W., A History of American Philosophy. New York: Columbia University Press, 1946. Schneider reviewed philosophical thought in the United States since the time of the Puritans. His interpretations were carefully drawn, and his treatment is still quite acceptable. He went further and deeper than Gabriel, yet his work is readable and illuminating. For the purposes of this

study, Schneider was especially good on Henry Adams and on the Darwinists. For the discussion of Adams, see pages 396-415.

Shannon, Fred A., The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897, Volume V of The Economic History of the United States, edited by Henry David, et al. New York and Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, Incorporated, 1945. Shannon has produced the definitive work on agricultural developments during the last half of the nineteenth century. He treated each section of the country separately, and in detail, pointing out significant trends. He discussed the Turner thesis, and argued that only certain portions of it were valid, rejecting the idea of a "safety valve." He placed marked emphasis upon the existence of two frontiers, one moving west and the other east. Shannon's discussion of events and practices in the post-bellum South is particularly worthy.

Spencer, Herbert, The Principles of Ethics. Volumes I and II. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1898. Most of Spencer's work that was published in the United States resulted from the efforts of Edward L. Youmanns, who had an interest in the Appleton Company. Spencer was the Social Darwinist par excellence in this work, applying evolutionary theory to ethical considerations.

Sumner, William Graham, Folkways: A Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals. New York: The New American Library, 1960. Sumner, a follower of Herbert Spencer, traced the development of mores within civilized society, finding all institutions the product of a slow but progressive growth. He felt that any kind of reform was impossible unless the people within the society realized the need and this happened only when conditions changed, i.e., social, economic or political. He used the Greek word "ethos" to designate the ethnic or endemic qualities of any given society -- the ways that any particular society conducted its daily life. He urged the study of the growth of various societies so as to determine the way in which an "ethos" developed, and then apply the lessons extracted in planning the future.

Thwing, Charles Franklin, The American College in American Life. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1897. Thwing presented a good general review of the aims of higher education in the late nineteenth century. He marked out the problem areas and estimated the financial resources necessary to correct the defects he noted. He was rather conservative, not willing to accept the emphasis on science in its fullest implications. His major aim was still to produce "gentlemen" by way of a college education.

Veblen, Thorstein, The Theory of the Leisure Class. New York: The Modern Library, 1934. Veblen studied modern society in terms of its organic growth, a decidedly Darwinian interpretation. His account sharpened when he discussed the modern leisure class, declaring it to be an out-dated phenomenon belonging to the predatory stage of human development. Although Veblen stated that he wrote not to condemn, merely

to point out a few fundamental facts, he managed to convey his disapproval. His ideas concerning conspicuous consumption and leisure caught on and have remained current to the present time, losing but little of their original vigor and vitality. The last chapter of the book dealt with higher education, a subject with which he concerned himself in more definite terms in his The Higher Learning (1918).

Walters, Raymond, Junior, Albert Gallatin, Jeffersonian Financier and Diplomat. New York: Macmillan Company, 1957. Walters was much more thorough and effective than Adams in his treatment of Gallatin. Adams concerned himself more with the affairs of the Republicans than did Walters, and Walters analyzed in better detail than did Adams. Without presenting all of the extraneous material injected by Adams, Walters conveyed an intimate familiarity with his subject, and still allowed Gallatin to speak for himself on crucial points. Walters portrayed a Gallatin true to his principles until his death, as witnessed his opposition to the Mexican War. Gallatin realized that the times had passed him by, as Walters noted, and withdrew from politics accordingly. Adams exaggerated Gallatin's philosophical qualities when he affirmed that Gallatin withdrew from politics only after he found what "vanity it was." Essentially, Gallatin had either to alter his position or quit politics, and he chose the latter, after surrendering much of the high ground he had previously taken -- as on the existence of a public debt and the advisability of direct taxation by the Federal government. He retained his faith in the "American mission" and the ability of the American people to carry out this mission, much as Henry Adams did fifty years later. Walters corrected much of the false impression left by Henry Adams, although he claimed that Adams' work formed the foundation for his own.

White, Andrew Dickson, A History of the Warfare of Science With Theology in Christendom. Volumes I and II. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1896. White reviewed the progress of science in the face of theological opposition. He began with the ancient Hebrews, and other peoples, finding traces of an evolutionary theory, and continued his discussion to include the late nineteenth century. He was not anti-religion, but violently anti-superstition. His general approach and treatment form a fine example of what has been called the "higher criticism." He valued the Bible not as a source of absolute truth, but as being indicative of the evolution of human thought. His Spencerian leanings were obvious, as were his prejudices against theologians. Although he over-stated his case, his work fulfilled the needs of the time.

White, Morton, Social Thought in America, The Revolt Against Formalism. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961. White developed his theme by discussing the thought of five representative men of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Charles Beard, Thorstein Veblen, O. W. Holmes, Junior, John Dewey and J. H. Robinson. He found that all of these men rebelled against an "empirical" or "utilitarian" concept of life and reality. These men all accepted the application of Darwin to the social sphere, and were interested in aiding man in

his struggle to learn and apply the lessons of life to daily living. White's introductory chapter sets the tone of the period, and his discussion of the men he selected to cover is excellent. He managed to justify his selections and the groupings he used.

V. Articles Found in Periodicals, and Other Sources, That Deal Either With Adams or the Late Nineteenth Century.

Adams, Henry, "The Buddha and the Brahman," Yale Review, Volume V, Number i (October, 1915), 82-89. This poem was first published in 1915, although Adams wrote it while returning from the Orient in 1891. John Hay was responsible for this publication, and he appended a preface in the form of a short explanatory note from Adams. The poem is specifically concerned with the proper way for an individual to meet the problems of life.

_____, "Civil Service Reform," North American Review, Volume CIX, Number ccxxv (October, 1869), 443-475. Adams called for civil service reform to unfetter the hands of the executive and the Liberal-Aristocratic reformers. He felt that the Senate had unconstitutionally usurped the patronage power, and that the patronage power itself was symbolic of the corruption in government so obvious to him. Officials should be appointed on merit alone. He asked for reform, but warned that it would not come until the people became aware of the need for it.

_____, "Count Edward de Crillon," American Historical Review, Volume I, Number i (October, 1895), 51-69. This article represents the only fruit of Adams' professed intent to continue his research in order to correct any faults in the History. Adams jibed at the fallibility of historians in this article as well, adumbrating his later thoughts.

_____, "Henry Adams' 'Diary of a Visit to Manchester,'" edited by Arthur W. Silver, American Historical Review, Volume LI, Number i (October, 1945), 74-89. Adams wrote this article while in London serving as his father's private secretary during the Civil War years. It demonstrates Adams' reactions to the working conditions under which the English textile workers labored.

_____, "Harvard College; 1786-87," North American Review, Volume CXIV, Number ccxxxiv (January, 1872), 110-147. Adams ostensibly reviewed two books in this article: one by Thomas C. Amory and the other by Edward Everett. But, using his grandfather's diary, he analyzed the life of a student in the late eighteenth century. Adams was interested in academic reform at the time, and quite possibly meant to demonstrate the archaic quality of many existing usages at Harvard.

_____, "The 'Independents' in the Canvass," North American Review, Volume CXXIII, Number ccliii (October, 1876), 426-457. Adams surveyed the American political scene and noted that reform was impossible unless the voter forced candidates to adhere to campaign promises. He warned that candidates must be tried and true, not mere potential.

He reduced all contemporary political problems to a lack of popular interest and to a perversion of the original constitutional system. The corruption was excruciatingly obvious to Adams. He proposed that Republicans vote Democratic in the coming election so that the shock of a Democratic victory would force an attitude of reform upon Republican leadership. Further, Tilden, the Democratic candidate, was a tried and true reformer, whereas Hayes had no such record.

_____, and Francis A. Walker, "The Legal Tender Act," North American Review, Volume CX, Number ccxxvii (April, 1870), 299-327. Walker did most of the research for the article, while Adams merely put it into readable prose. Adams had definite convictions concerning the Legal Tender Act, and these came forth in the article. He caustically condemned such governmental expediciencies as mere betrayals of traditional and just principles. He was quite "sound" in his financial views at this time, as was Walker. Adams altered his position in response to later occurrences.

_____, "The Principles of Geology by Sir Charles Lyell," a review by Henry Adams, North American Review, Volume CVII, Number ccxxi (October, 1868), 465-501. Adams reviewed Lyell's work in a generally hostile vein. Adams adhered to the catastrophism of the elder Agassiz, hence the uniformitarian postulates of Lyell were unacceptable for him. He saw that Lyell had failed to answer many questions, whereas Agassiz had constructed a symmetrical and balanced interpretation of the origin and disappearance of the species.

_____, "The Session," North American Review, Volume CVIII, Number ccxxiii (April, 1869), 610-640. In the first of a proposed series of articles reviewing the Congressional sessions, Adams surveyed the government's record during the past year and expressed disappointment. This article created quite a furor, and Adams felt that he was finally attaining the place in Washington he deserved. He meant to make himself a power through the press. His analysis of the proper foreign policy for the United States was well argued, and set forth a course similar to the one followed by Hamilton Fish and John Hay, among others. He also argued that by using patient and slow diplomacy, England could be brought to see that her interests were in Asia, and that the United States could be trusted to protect English interests in the Western Hemisphere.

_____, "The Session," North American Review, Volume CXI, Number ccxxviii (July, 1870), 29-62. In the last of his abortive series, Adams posed as the scathing critic of a system gone wrong. Adams used this article to point out that the "reserved powers" of the states were being interpreted away, with the central government emerging supreme, and that the separation of powers within the central government was being undercut and destroyed. Adams voiced concern about the dangers inherent in a strong central government, and called for a return to the constitutional theories of the Fathers. In the "Gold Conspiracy," Adams posed this question of centralism in more express and dynamic terms. This "Session" article was subsequently distributed as a campaign document by the Democratic Party, since a

better statement of the incompetence and gross corruption of the Grant administration could not have been produced. Adams expressed his satisfaction at this occurrence, and at the reaction of the Republican leadership, typified by one Mid-western Senator who called Adams a "begonia." Adams stopped his "Session" articles when he accepted the position at Harvard, a position he assumed largely through the influence of his family, but also because he realized the little he was accomplishing at his present task.

Alden, John Eliot, editor, "Henry Adams as Editor; A Group of Unpublished Letters Written to David A. Wells," New England Quarterly, Volume XI, Number 1 (March, 1938), 146-152. In a letter to Wells (found on page 151) of April 20, 1875, Adams claimed that he was going to New York to manage ". . . this troublesome conference," proposed for April, 1875, to deal with the party strategy in the Ohio elections and the coming presidential conflict. Using this letter, and others wherein Adams made similar statements about his importance to the independent group, Alden insisted that Adams was an effective practical politician during the seventies. He described Adams as one of the leading figures in the reform movement. Alden stretched the point, as can be seen if one looks to Adams' many letters and the history of the period. Adams typically claimed too much credit for himself, so avidly he searched for fame as a leader. It appears more correct to label him a follower, a follower of Schurz, Wells, Walker, Bowles, Jacob Cox, Bristow, whoever would lead and adhere to the principles that Adams found acceptable.

Blackmur, R. P., "Henry Adams, Three Late Moments," Kenyon Review, Volume II, Number 1 (Winter, 1940), 7-29. Blackmur's discussion centered around Adams' "late" enthusiasm for medieval music, concluding that Adams acted in character when he was charmed by twelfth century music. Adams' life had always been one of the imagination. He acted from the postulate that one led dual lives, one of the world and one of the spirit (as demonstrated in Esther). Blackmur affirmed that Adams approached Catholicism but refused to submit -- or was unable to -- because to do so involved a surrender of personal integrity. Most of Blackmur's interesting essay concerned Adams' reaction to the "Prison Song" of King Richard the Lion-Hearted.

Cater, Harold Dean, editor, "Henry Adams Reports on a German Gymnasium," American Historical Review, Volume LIII, Number 1 (October, 1947), 59-74. Cater has edited Adams' reaction to his introduction to a German school during his 1858-1860 tour of Europe.

Carnegie, Andrew, "The Gospel of Wealth," North American Review, Volume CLXXXIII, Number dxcix (September, 1906), 526-537. Carnegie decided that the race was bettered by individualism. Only a few could accumulate fortunes, as opposed to a "competence," and these few held the wealth in trust for the people. A wealthy man must distribute his wealth so as to do the most good for humanity before his death. He must not trust anyone to do it for him, as such plans were subject to the urging of human selfishness. Carnegie condemned almsgiving, and lauded the examples set by such philanthropists as

Peter Cooper, Enoch Pratt and Leland Stanford. Carnegie adhered to Spencerian postulates and was a representative Social Darwinist, of the credo in vogue during the late nineteenth century.

Commager, Henry Steele, "Henry Adams," South Atlantic Quarterly, Volume XXVI, Number iii (July, 1927), 252-265. Herein Commager expressed embryonic theories concerning Adams, as he had not firmly made up his mind as yet. There is noticeable improvement in style in his later accounts, and the thought has assumed more positive form. In 1927, Commager said that although Adams called for a new history, he wrote in the traditional vein. This particular article primarily discussed Adams, the historian.

Dickson, David H., "Henry Adams and Clarence King: The Record of a Friendship," New England Quarterly, Volume XVII, Number ii (June, 1944), 229-254. Dickson felt that the "Five of Hearts" were inconsequential, both as individuals and as a group, and aroused curiosity only because of exclusiveness. He explored the "closest friendship" Adams ever knew, but more in the vein of a biography of King. It seems doubtful that the King-Adams relationship was the closest Adams experienced.

Glicksberg, Charles I., "Henry Adams and the Repudiation of Science," Scientific Monthly, Volume LCVI, Number i (1947), 63-71. In a brief and illuminating article, Glicksberg found that Adams was not the scientist that many critics have claimed.

Holt, W. Stull, "The Idea of Scientific History," Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume I, Number iii (June, 1940), 352-362. Holt reviewed the problems facing those who claimed to write "scientific" history, affirming that the claim was misleading and fallacious. At the same time, he described and analyzed the various trends in American historiography, briefly and authoritatively. His discussion ended on an optimistic note, as he felt that a more "sophisticated scholarship" was being called forth by the burgeoning awareness of the weaknesses of "scientific" history.

Jordy, William H., "Henry Adams and Francis Parkman," American Quarterly, Volume III, Number i (Spring, 1951), 50-68. This article appeared intact in Jordy's volume on Adams as the "scientific" historian (see listing above).

Laughlin, James Laurence, "Some Recollections of Henry Adams," Scribner's Magazine, Volume LXIX (May, 1921), 576-585. This article provides a familiar look at Henry Adams that is quite welcome after many impersonal evaluations.

Lovett, Robert Morss, "The Betrayal of Henry Adams," Dial, Volume LXV, Number dlxxviii (November 30, 1918), 468-472. Lovett summed Adams' opinion of his own fate in one word, "betrayal." Adams had expected education from the world, education conceived of as Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards viewed religion. But he found only chaos instead, not even religious faith. The Quixotism in Adams was apparent

to Lovett, but the real significance of Adams, for Lovett, lay in his attempt to impose a unity upon the world without the benefit of the forces exerted by sex, religion or science. Lovett held that it was not Adams' fault that his faith led to the "reductio ad absurdum [sic]." This is a highly interpretive position, and Lovett offered scant evidence to support his thesis, aside from his review of the Education.

Mitchell, Stewart, "Henry Adams and Some of His Students," Proceedings (Massachusetts Historical Society), Volume LXVI (1936-1941), 294-310. Mitchell offered an intimate glimpse into the academic experiences of Henry Adams. One obtains an impression of Adams as the competent and satisfied professor.

Morison, Samuel Eliot, "A Letter and a Few Remeniscences of Henry Adams," New England Quarterly, Volume XXVII, Number 1 (March, 1954), 95-97. Morison reported Adams as saying that he quit the discipline of American history because of a lack of appreciation for his efforts. He determined to write for his own amusement rather than waste his energy upon an uninterested public.

Nuhn, Ferner, "Henry Adams and the Hand of the Fathers," found in Literature in America: An Anthology of Literary Criticism, edited by Philip Rahv. New York: Meridan Books, 1960. Nuhn emphasized the duality in Adams, but along unique lines as compared to other critics, excepting Oscar Cargill. He said that Adams experienced a split between the man adhering to the "Law of the Fathers," and the counterpart following the "Love of the Mothers." In twenty-one argumentative pages, in which many factual errors are in evidence, Nuhn arrived at no sound or conclusive judgments. All he said was that Adams could not be completely understood because he chose to hide his inner feelings. Most of Nuhn's observations were called forth by Adams' "Prayer to the Virgin." As eloquent as he is, Nuhn lost his sense of balance and carried to an unjustifiable extent his interpretation, seemingly forgetting the other evidence existing aside from the "Prayer." He argued that Adams actually escaped into the twelfth century, doubtful at best. Adams knew history, and realized that a "wrangling scholar" -- Nuhn's description -- would have been unpopular during that period of time. Adams searched for "truth," and inclined toward de-bunking. This would never have been accepted in the twelfth century. In other words, Nuhn said that Adams accepted an arrangement wherein his freedom and personal integrity were impaired. The thesis as thus stated seems highly improbable, and it appears more certain to say that Adams felt that love and law met in the balanced human conscience -- despite Mr. Ferner Nuhn (pp. 247-267).

Riddleberger, Patrick W., "The Break in the Radical Ranks: Liberals vs. Stalwarts in the Election of 1872," Journal of Negro History, Volume XLIV, Number ii (April, 1959), 136-157. Riddleberger found that the motivation for the Liberals derived as much from a concern for success in practical politics as from an urge to reform. They fought for their place in the Republican Party, in opposition to the "Ins."

By tracing the careers of some of the prominent Liberals, he proved his thesis by analyzing the Liberal vote in the election of 1872.

, "The Radicals' Abandonment of the Negro During Reconstruction," Journal of Negro History, Volume XLV, Number ii (April, 1960), 80-102. In this article, Riddleberger argued that Charles Sumner was the only Liberal to adhere to the initial impulse that started the movement during the years immediately preceding the Civil War. Sumner's reasoned stand approximated that 1854 decision of the Supreme Court. Riddleberger held that the other Liberals bid for the Southern "Bourbon" support with the result of the abandonment of the Negro. They, the Liberals, worried about constitutional questions raised by Reconstruction policies more than about promoting the cause for freedom by aiding the Negro.

Shepherd, Odell, "The Ghost of Henry Adams," Nation, Volume CXLVII, Number xviii (October 22, 1938), 419. In a review of Ford's second volume of Adams' letters, Shepherd voiced his opinion of Henry Adams. He was impressed by the "primitivism" in Adams -- a view shared by Oscar Cargill -- and stated that Adams was never educated. He said that Adams ". . . never attained normality of thought or feeling, and his mind was not coherent." Adams cried out against America's lack of religious faith, failing to perceive the "social faith" in abundance. It seems apparent that Shepherd was too easily swayed by what Adams said. By a close appraisal of letters and works, one finds that Adams was well aware of the American social faith; in fact, he shared it, and continually attempted to use it in his attempts at reform.

Simonds, Katherine, "The Tragedy of Mrs. Henry Adams," New England Quarterly, Volume IX, Number iv (December, 1936), 564-582. Simonds expressed views quite hostile toward Henry Adams but very sympathetic toward his wife. She said that the H Street residence soon became the center of a cultured circle, kept exclusive because of the jealousy of the members who restricted the membership. The Adamses were supreme in this restricted circle. Thus Mrs. Adams joined the aristocracy of the intellect and subsequently lost her former kind-hearted congeniality to be replaced by a bitter cynicism. Adams and his wife shared a terror of science and the world, as they refused religious faith but never found a substitute for it. When Marion Adams lost her pillar of strength -- her father -- Henry Adams could only respond to her needs for comfort and assurance with the same riddle-like answers of old. As her terror increased, she decided she could no longer face the world, and simply killed herself. Thus Adams is the villain in this interpretation. He failed in his primary obligation.

Spiller, Robert E., "Henry Adams," found in the Literary History of the United States, edited by Robert E. Spiller, et al. New York: Macmillan Company, 1948, pp. 1080-1103. Spiller noted the burgeoning symbolism in Adams. In a comparison of Adams to Frank Norris, Spiller developed the theme that Adams adopted, stating that Adams used science as a symbol. Spiller is perhaps the best strictly literary critic who has treated Adams.

Stone, James, "Henry Adams' Philosophy of History," New England Quarterly, Volume XIV, Number iii (September, 1941), 538-548. Stone found that Adams went beyond most "scientific" historians by using theory, pure and simple. His philosophy of history became a philosophy of life. Stone said that Adams approached religion only in his humility before the unknown.

Taylor, William R., "Historical Bifocals on the Year 1800," New England Quarterly, Volume XXIII, Number ii (June, 1950), 172-186. Here is a fine discussion of the historical techniques of Henry Adams and John B. McMasters. Taylor concluded that although Adams was biased, he saw history as a record of "past-becoming-present."

Thwing, Charles Franklin, "Henry Adams," found in Guides, Philosophers and Friends: Studies of College Men, by Charles Franklin Thwing. New York: Macmillan Company, 1927, pp. 223-236. Thwing's discussion of Adams was quite personal, as he was among the select Adams acquaintances who received a copy of the Education when it was originally printed in 1907. Thwing brought personal recollections and interpretations to bear in formulating an intimate portrait of Adams -- and the other figures covered in the volume. He concluded that Adams was essentially a religious man who saw the "Light," using the words of St. John. Thwing said that religious faith was to Adams as life is to the body and the spirit. Adams regretted that the world was insensible to the implications of a common faith. Thwing used Chartres, the Education, and Adams' letters to prove his thesis. His characterization of Adams as a "literary historian" is well taken, as are his comments upon the "Voltairean raillery" in Adams -- a term coined by William Thayer. One must take Adams' comments as if offered in conversational jest to stimulate thought, in Thwing's interpretation. Never meaning all that he said or implied, Adams felt impelled to challenge his audience to be more critical before accepting as valid any assumed postulates of "truth" and right action. He aimed not simply at destroying beliefs, but at training people to think closely about the reasons for believing as they did. Thus he conceived of education, according to Thwing, with history being the knowledge of causation. It seems doubtful that Adams was always conscious of his actions along this line, but Thwing thought him to be so. The thesis is attractive, and Thwing had the advantage of being intimately acquainted with Adams.

Wagner, Vern, "The Lotus of Henry Adams," New England Quarterly, Volume XXVII, Number i (March, 1954), 75-94. Wagner held that Adams reacted to his inability to influence the course of human affairs with a reverence for silence, finding it alone "respectable and respected." Adams saw the second law of thermodynamics as the governing rule of a progressive universe, with entropy -- silence -- as the ultimate goal. Wagner suggested that Mrs. Adams committed suicide in her despair over the loss of her father because Adams was incapable of meeting her needs. Katherine Simonds (see the listing above) arrived at this conclusion some time before Wagner did, although Wagner claimed that Simonds missed the point. In Wagner's interpretation, one again encounters emphasis upon Adams' idea of two distinct

lives within the life of any well-adjusted individual -- of thought and action. Wagner went further by saying that the Buddha was Marion Adams and the Brahman was Adams -- the important figures in Adams' poem, "The Buddha and the Brahman." Marion sacrificed life -- a simple solution to the problems of life derived from yielding to action without thought -- but Adams could not follow her example because he inevitably thought before he acted. His humanistic interest in man and his fate kept Adams interested in the affairs of the earth, but he lacked the power to bring about any significant reforms. Wagner held that the St. Gaudens memorial erected over Mrs. Adams' grave represented the essence of Henry Adams' thought -- the end of his logic -- the "Lotus," "Thought," "Silence," however one titled it. Wagner's article is intriguing and stimulating, but he erred in his emphasis on Adams the scientist, and in his slight on Katherine Simonds.

VI. Secondary Sources That Are of Value in Forming a Conception of Adams and His Times

(Any listing of such sources could run to volumes rather than pages, hence what is here offered is meant to supplement what has gone before. There is no claim of being complete, but merely a desire to present useful material for one interested in the topic.)

Aaron, Daniel, Men of Good Hope: A Story of American Progressives. New York: Oxford University Press, 1951. This is an excellent interpretative account of the topic indicated.

Arvin, Newton, editor, The Selected Letters of Henry Adams, of the Great Letters Series. n.p.: Farrar, Straus and Young, Incorporated, 1951.

Baym, Max I., The French Education of Henry Adams. New York: Columbia University Press, 1951. Baym has produced perhaps the best work on Henry Adams' thought, philosophically speaking. He did his best work when he scrutinized so closely all of the Adams papers and books, not only those written by Adams, but also those in his library, in order to trace influence if any could be found.

Becker, Carl, Everyman His Own Historian. New York: F. S. Crofts, 1935. Anyone studying history and historians will find this stimulating book an essential.

Brooks, Van Wyck, "The Miseducation of Henry Adams," found in Sketches in Literary Criticism, by Van Wyck Brooks. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1932. Brooks' position has been indicated above (In this volume, see pages 197-210).

Cargill, Oscar, "The Medievalism of Henry Adams," found in Essays in Honor of Carleton Brown, by Oscar Cargill. New York: New York University Press, 1940. Cargill offers an original interpretation of Adams, stressing the latter's escape into the past. Cargill expressed well the idea of the "Mariolatry" in Adams, although the thesis is doubtful to some critics (see pages 269-329 in this volume).

Gardner, James Emet, "Henry Adams; What He Wanted, Why He 'Failed,' What He Meant by 'Education.'" Unpublished Master's Thesis, Montana State University, 1946. Although this thesis is quite superficial, some useful information can be obtained.

Garraty, John A., Henry Cabot Lodge: A Biography. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Incorporated, 1953. Because of the close association between Adams and Lodge, this volume offers much useful information to the Adams student, on Adams, the times, and the political events of his time.

La Farge, Mabel, Letters to a Neice and Prayer to the Virgin of Chartres. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920. In this slim volume, one finds Adams being characterized as the doubter who ultimately turned to the Catholic faith. The letters are available elsewhere, for the most part.

Lewisohn, Ludwig, Expression in America. New York: Harper, 1932. This is literary criticism on a high level. Perhaps the only source that is better while being strictly literary also is the work of Robert Spiller (See pages 278, ff., and 342-347).

Mumford, Lewis, The Brown Decades: A Study of the Arts in America, 1865-1895. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1932. Mumford covered the significant developments of the period, indicating his hostility toward an American culture that lacked a definite foundation based upon the American experience. However, the attitude has softened from the original rigidity expressed in his earlier book, The Golden Day, A Study in American Experience and Culture (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1926).

Wilson, Edmund, editor, The Shock of Recognition. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Incorporated, 1943. This article, prepared by a careful and painstaking scholar, is both stimulating and provoking. Although the emphasis may be objectionable to some critics, the essay is well written and exudes an aura of respectability and authoritativeness.